



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 17 AUGUST 2025 – Trinity 9

COLLECT

Almighty God,
who sent your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of your Church:
open our hearts to the riches of your grace,
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 82

- 1 God has taken his stand in the council of heaven; ♦
in the midst of the gods he gives judgement:
- 2 'How long will you judge unjustly ♦
and show such favour to the wicked?
- 3 'You were to judge the weak and the orphan; ♦
defend the right of the humble and needy;
- 4 'Rescue the weak and the poor; ♦
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.
- 5 'They have no knowledge or wisdom; they walk on still in darkness: ♦
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- 6 'Therefore I say that though you are gods ♦
and all of you children of the Most High,
- 7 'Nevertheless, you shall die like mortals ♦
and fall like one of their princes.'
- 8 Arise, O God and judge the earth, ♦
for it is you that shall take all nations for your possession.

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews, chapter 11, verses 29-12.2.

By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, without us, be made perfect.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from Luke, chapter 12, verses 49-56.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord. I know them, and they follow me.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke, chapter 12, verses 49-56.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Luke 12.49-56

Jesus said, 'I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed!

Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided:

father against son

and son against father,

mother against daughter

and daughter against mother,

mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law

and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

He also said to the crowds, 'When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, "It is going to rain"; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, "There will be scorching heat"; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

A Reflection from Dave

Catching a train journey when tired is risky. There are some who have regular commutes that can rest, even sleep, and yet their body remains so attentive to their journey that they still wake up before their stop. Yet others end up sleeping deeply, oblivious to the world around them, until they wake up at the end of the line! It would be a blessing rather than an annoyance for them to be woken up before this happens.

A wake-up call is exactly what we get with Jesus' words in Luke 12:49-56. Where last week's reading began with Jesus saying, "Do not be afraid, little flock," here he opens with "I came to bring fire to the earth", before claiming to bring division instead of peace, and finishing by calling people hypocrites who can't interpret the present time! Not words that often make it onto Christian tea towels or cards, but Jesus' words all the same, and ones aiming to get a reaction.

Because for Jesus, his purpose was very clear. The fiery judgement is what he takes upon himself as he hangs on the cross, and the baptism he undergoes is completed when he goes through death and rises again. He heads towards this willingly, almost impatiently, for our sake. What a saviour!

But these actions for us require a decision from us, as Jesus becomes the dividing line between those sheltered by him, and those facing the storm alone. This line can run deep, as many coming to faith in countries that persecute Christians will attest. The choice can be between a secure place within family and society without Jesus, or a dangerous life apart from them because of the decision to follow Jesus. Even when this isn't our personal experience, following Jesus means choosing him daily, even when that is hard.

Jesus called his original listeners hypocrites because they could predict the weather (without using an app!) and decide how to act accordingly, but let the impact of his challenge wash over them. Jesus' punchy words were a wake up call to them, and should be to us too about the implications of our decision to both follow him and to keep following him in our world today. Where might we need to wake up to see those things Jesus would challenge in our present times, both locally and globally? Where might we need to be attentive enough to stand on Jesus' side of the dividing line, even when that is hard? Or are we sleeping deeply, missing his wake up call, even as the stations rush by?