



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 24 AUGUST – Trinity 10**

**COLLECT**

Let your merciful ears, O Lord,  
be open to the prayers of your humble servants;  
and that they may obtain their petitions  
make them to ask such things as shall please you;  
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 103. 1-8**

- 1 Bless the Lord, O my soul, ♦  
and all that is within me bless his holy name.
- 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, ♦  
and forget not all his benefits;
- 3 Who forgives all your sins ♦  
and heals all your infirmities;
- 4 Who redeems your life from the Pit ♦  
and crowns you with faithful love and compassion;
- 5 Who satisfies you with good things, ♦  
so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.
- 6 The Lord executes righteousness ♦  
and judgement for all who are oppressed.
- 7 He made his ways known to Moses ♦  
and his works to the children of Israel.
- 8 The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, ♦  
slow to anger and of great kindness.

## **A reading from the letter to the Hebrews, chapter 12, verses 18-29.**

You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. (For they could not endure the order that was given, 'If even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned to death.' Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I tremble with fear.') But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! At that time his voice shook the earth; but now he has promised, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven.' This phrase 'Yet once more' indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

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 13, verses 10-17.

***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 13, verses 10-17.

**Glory to you, O Lord**

***And then at the end:***

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Luke 13.10-17

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, 'There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.' But the Lord answered him and said, 'You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?' When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

## *A Reflection from Dave*

Earlier this month, a group of cavers in Yorkshire were surprised to find a live sheep in a deep underground cavern. It had made the mistake of falling in, becoming hopelessly trapped. They couldn't bear to leave it to die, and so, using the little equipment they had, they hoisted the sheep (who they named Beryl) as best they could, eventually freeing her to return to her owner. One rescuer described caving as "problem-solving", before adding, "there's no textbook way of getting a sheep out of a cave, you've just got to do it."

Just like Beryl, at the heart of our gospel reading is a woman who is hopelessly trapped. She has a condition that caused her back to be bent over for eighteen years. Yet Jesus diagnoses her problem as going deeper, by describing her as "a daughter of Abraham who Satan has bound for eighteen long years." She needs more than just physical release. She, like all of us, needs freedom from spiritual bondage too. Jesus' compassion will not leave her trapped, so he calls her forward, touches her, and tells her "you are set free." Upon receiving healing, she immediately praises God.

And yet a witness to this miraculous healing disapproves of her release. This miracle happened on the Sabbath, a holy day of rest, and the Synagogue Leader cannot believe that God would act against the Sabbath rules – even for the sake of healing. His disapproval of others seeking release from their ailments stands in stark contrast to the woman's praise for her sudden freedom.

Yet there is no textbook way that God shows his compassion – he just does it, again and again. In Jesus we see that God's compassion is not trapped by rules. In fact, it fulfils the meaning of Sabbath by freeing the woman to praise God. This is what our Hebrews passage says we were made for: not to fear doing the wrong thing in approaching God, but to receive God's unshakeable kingdom and to freely worship him with thanksgiving.

Because the voice of Jesus says to all of us, "you are set free." Do we believe this to be true, and do we live thankful lives for it? We are free from becoming like Beryl the sheep, trapped in the cavern of our own mistakes. Instead, we share the freedom of the woman, and the task she fulfilled, of becoming the leader of the crowd as they praise God for the great things Jesus has done.