



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 31 AUGUST 2025 – Trinity 11

COLLECT

O God, you declare your almighty power
most chiefly in showing mercy and pity:
mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace,
that we, running the way of your commandments,
may receive your gracious promises,
and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure;
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 112

1 Alleluia.

Blessed are those who fear the Lord ♦
and have great delight in his commandments.

2 Their descendants will be mighty in the land, ♦
a generation of the faithful that will be blest.

3 Wealth and riches will be in their house, ♦
and their righteousness endures for ever.

4 Light shines in the darkness for the upright; ♦
gracious and full of compassion are the righteous.

5 It goes well with those who are generous in lending ♦
and order their affairs with justice,

6 For they will never be shaken; ♦
the righteous will be held in everlasting remembrance.

7 They will not be afraid of any evil tidings; ♦
their heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.

8 Their heart is sustained and will not fear, ♦
until they see the downfall of their foes.

9 They have given freely to the poor;
their righteousness stands fast for ever; ♦
their head will be exalted with honour.

10 The wicked shall see it and be angry;
they shall gnash their teeth in despair; ♦
the desire of the wicked shall perish.

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews, chapter 13, verses 1-8 and 15-16.

Hebrews 13.1-8, 15-16

Service Well-Pleasing to God

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. Let marriage be held in honour by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' So we can say with confidence,

'The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.
What can anyone do to me?'

Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.

Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to 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 14, verses 1 and 7-14.

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 14, verses 1 and 7-14.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Luke 14.1, 7-14

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

Humility and Hospitality

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honour, he told them a parable. 'When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honour, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, "Give this person your place", and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher"; then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'

He said also to the one who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'

A Reflection from Hannah

At first glance, it may feel as though Jesus has appointed himself an etiquette expert in our Gospel reading, covering the module 'Dos and Don'ts of attending a banquet'. We may then say to ourselves 'how interesting, but when are we likely to find ourselves at a banquet'?! But of course, things are not as they seem on the surface- and that is signposted by Luke telling us that this is a parable. It has a double meaning. So what is it about?

Well, in the context of constantly being watched and scrutinised by the Pharisees, Jesus is (once again) enjoying a communal meal and talking about the nature of life together... and our human tendency towards thinking of ourselves as better than others. Just the very notion that there is a pecking order to mentally calculate and place ourselves within, when choosing a seat at banqueting table, shows us something about a particular kind of sin- that of pride- which we can all be tempted. Pride in thinking of ourselves as more important or more worthy than others; and even pride in thinking of ourselves as knowing better than God. Driving the point home in the final verses, Jesus names all sorts of people whom those listening would be unlikely to acknowledge or speak to and says invite them; notice them; serve them. They too bear the image of Christ, they are equal to anyone. An observation echoed by the challenging but beautiful image of entertaining angels unawares that is used to illustrate the importance of hospitality in the reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Pride is a sneaky risk, and so it's always helpful to embrace an opportunity to check out its power in our lives, and to remind ourselves that the ground at the foot of the cross is equal. It can be a case of thinking ourselves better than others; but it can also get a foothold by making us think we are *less* worthy than anyone else. I remember a time at theological college when I had something of a 'wobble'. It seemed to me that everyone else was ace, and I was an imposter. Unworthy, incompetent, not up to the task. I went to see a tutor and the chaplain, and they both (very sweetly!) told me that I had lots to offer, was very capable, was doing well etc etc. But it all fell on deaf ears, because somehow it felt like it missed the point. Then one morning, I was sat at breakfast with a different tutor. There's always something disarming about sitting in parallel- like in a car or at a table- we often say more than we intend! Anyway, I mentioned this concern to him and said 'I just don't feel worthy of this'. He stopped eating, looked at me and said 'Well, you're not.' Wow! That cracked things open. As he went on to explain, the point of the Gospel is that none of us is worthy- none of us has anything to offer God- never mind whether it's more or less impressive than the next person. The life of the disciple is the life of one who realises our common unworthiness and seeks utter dependence on God in Christ for all things.

And that same truth is lurking in this parable. In our pride, in our small-mindedness, in all that diminishes us, we are confronted with the large-hearted love of God, who is pure grace for us and loves us all equally.