



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 16 AUGUST 2026 – 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 67

- 1 God be gracious to us and bless us ♦
and make his face to shine upon us,
- 2 That your way may be known upon earth, ♦
your saving power among all nations.
- 3 *Let the peoples praise you, O God; ♦*
let all the peoples praise you.
- 4 O let the nations rejoice and be glad, ♦
for you will judge the peoples righteously
and govern the nations upon earth.
- 5 *Let the peoples praise you, O God; ♦*
let all the peoples praise you.
- 6 Then shall the earth bring forth her increase, ♦
and God, our own God, will bless us.
- 7 God will bless us, ♦
and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

A reading from the letter to the Romans, chapter 11, verses 1-2a, 29-32.

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

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 Matthew, chapter 15, verses 10-28.

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 Matthew, chapter 15, verses 10-28.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, 'Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.' Then the disciples approached and said to him, 'Do you know that the Pharisees took offence when they heard what you said?' He answered, 'Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.' But Peter said to him, 'Explain this parable to us.' Then he said, 'Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.'

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.' He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly.

A Reflection from Dave

There was lots of advice recently about how to watch Wednesday's solar eclipse safely, protecting our eyes with special glasses, or looking indirectly through pin hole cameras, and even colanders! However, on the radio there was a lady recalling the previous eclipse in 1999, and how she was in hospital and used her own xray to look at the eclipse as it happened! The safety of this approach may be questionable, but its a profound thought that she looked towards the wonderful sight of the eclipse by looking through a literal image of her own internal brokenness.

Internal brokenness is not, however, just a physical issue, but also a spiritual one, where sin is more than the actions we do, but works its way into our core, the very heart of us. In Jesus' day the Pharisees had clear ideas of how to deal with spiritual brokenness whilst maintaining access to God. You needed to follow the right rules, avoid the wrong types of people - both of which are challenged by Jesus in our gospel reading.

Just before our passage, the Pharisees accuse Jesus' disciples of neglecting religious cleanliness rules. This was not simply about hygiene. Old Testament law stipulated that faithfulness to God involved avoiding certain foods, and contact with certain things or people. The Pharisees practised hand washing to prevent outside things contaminating the body, and clearly looked down on those who didn't.

However Jesus is willing to offend the Pharisees, by stating that their practices were ineffective. They cared too much about avoiding contamination from the outside, whilst neglecting how broken sin made them internally. Food might pass through the body, but a heart full of pride, bitterness, lies, or jealousy remained - it requires more than avoidance strategies or hand washing to fix that.

The solution, however, is found as Jesus encounters an outsider, a Canaanite woman. To the Pharisees, she was doubly unclean: both for her contact with a demon-tormented daughter, and because she was not from God's promised people, Israel. Jesus' initial responses show that he recognises these external details. But where he chastised the outwardly religious Pharisees, he instead praises this outsider-woman: 'great is your faith!' He saw beyond the group she belonged to, beyond the things she touched or did. Instead he looked into her heart, as she sought God's help in Jesus despite knowing that by the rules she was cut off from it, and Jesus eagerly recognised and responded to this faith as he healed her daughter. No amount of hand-washing, or separating ourselves from outsiders, will deal with the internal brokenness that remains within us, but Jesus can and will.

Looking at the eclipse with unprotected eyes can make us fear damage from the outside-in, but with Jesus the opposite is true. Like the woman who looked at the eclipse through her xray, we come to Jesus through our own internal brokenness, not denying it, not avoiding it, but seeking him despite it, alongside many other broken people. In doing this, we find his wonderful love quickly shines back to where it is most needed, to grow a faithfulness that comes from the heart, from the inside-out.