

(4:09) Thoughts for the Sunday after Ascension also known as the seventh Sunday of Easter

The lectionary readings from the Authorized version of the bible are those specified in the Common Worship lectionary and the Collect is from the Book of Common Prayer

(4:25) The Collect

O GOD the King of glory, who hast exalted thine only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto thy kingdom in heaven; We beseech thee, leave us not comfortless; but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

(4:57) Verses from Psalm 68

- 1 Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered:  
let them also that hate him flee before him.
- 2 Like as the smoke vanisheth, so shalt thou drive them away:  
and like as wax melteth at the fire, so let the ungodly perish at the presence of God.
- 3 But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God:  
let them also be merry and joyful.
- 4 O sing unto God, and sing praises unto his Name:  
magnify him that rideth upon the heavens, as it were upon an horse; praise him in his  
Name JAH, and rejoice before him.
- 5 He is a Father of the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the widows:  
even God in his holy habitation.
- 6 He is the God that maketh men to be of one mind in an house, and bringeth the prisoners  
out of captivity:  
but letteth the runagates continue in scarceness.
- 7 O God, when thou wentest forth before the people:  
when thou wentest through the wilderness,
- 8 The earth shook, and the heavens dropped at the presence of God:  
even as Sinai also was moved at the presence of God, who is the God of Israel.
- 9 Thou, O God, sentest a gracious rain upon thine inheritance:  
and refreshedst it when it was weary.

- 10 Thy congregation shall dwell therein:  
for thou, O God, hast of thy goodness prepared for the poor.
- 32 Sing unto God, O ye kingdoms of the earth:  
O sing praises unto the Lord;
- 33 Who sitteth in the heavens over all from the beginning:  
lo, he doth send out his voice, yea, and that a mighty voice.
- 34 Ascribe ye the power to God over Israel:  
his worship, and strength is in the clouds.
- 35 O God, wonderful art thou in thy holy places:  
even the God of Israel; he will give strength and power unto his people; blessed be God.

(7:16) The old testament reading is taken from the thirty sixth chapter of the book of the prophet Ezekiel beginning at the twenty fourth verse:

- 24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.
- 25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.
- 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.
- 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.
- 28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

(8:14) A reading from the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles beginning at the sixth verse:

- 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?
- 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

- 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
- 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.
- 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;
- 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.
- 12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.
- 13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.
- 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

(9:59) The Epistle is written in the fourth and fifth chapters of the first letter of Peter:

#### Chapter 4

- 12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:
- 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.
- 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

#### Chapter 5

- 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:
- 7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.
- 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

(11:32) The Gospel reading is written in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of Saint John beginning at the first verse:

1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

(13:30) A 'Thought for the Week'

We are in the ten days between Ascension and Pentecost during which the 120 followers of Jesus waited in lock down in that upper room in Jerusalem. So today, in this time of self isolation, we too have an opportunity to seek the Lord, acknowledging our need of him and the refreshment of his Spirit who pours the love of God into our hearts.

All four readings this week offer a rich source of encouragement and challenge at this difficult time.

The reading from 1 Peter 4 & 5 is very relevant, as Peter encourages his readers in a time of suffering. He says that we should not be surprised by sufferings. Peter knew that Jesus had said that there would be persecution and pestilences, encouraging us to trust in him through such times (Luke 21:11). So, Peter bids us rejoice because we are sharing in Christ's sufferings [4:13]. He goes on to bid us humble ourselves "*under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up...*" and "*Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*" [5:6,7]. That thought, "*He cares for you.*" Is helpful, but the literal meaning of the Greek "*for to him it matters...*" is even more encouraging. To know that we matter to God reassures us that he is able to protect and keep us in every circumstance, and gives us the confidence that, as we humbly seek him, he will turn apparent disaster to good. So let us joyfully acknowledge "*Only you can move the mountain.*"

In Psalm 68 we find words to sing praise to God and rejoice before him. We praise him because He is mighty, mighty both to save and to bless. We rejoice because He is "*the father to the fatherless, the defender of widows, God in his holy dwelling.*" As we praise him we are moved to proclaim his power, his power to bless and overcome evil [v34].

It is that power that, in Acts 1, the risen Jesus told his followers to wait for after his ascension. It is the power that, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit brought enabling them to become his witnesses, telling how Jesus has come to give eternal life to the dead.

Finally, John 17 gives us a wonderful insight into both Jesus' care for us and what eternal life is. Aware that he will shortly be returning to the Father, and leaving his followers in need of help in a hostile world, Jesus prays: "*I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. **Holy Father protect them by the power of your name...so that they may be one as we are one.***" [v 11] Be encouraged, even now Jesus is asking the Father to protect us and to bring us into unity in him.

Ponder on his words as he tells us: "*This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*" People find 'eternity' difficult to grasp. But Jesus places the emphasis on knowing the living God, who is *the eternal one*. In the Bible that word 'know' means so much more than knowing about God in our heads. It speaks of the knowing him in our hearts and the intimacy of the close relationship that God seeks with each and everyone of us. And it is the Holy Spirit who comes to pour the love of God into our hearts, so we can call Him, 'Abba, Father'.

So rejoice in the Lord, humbly seeking to come into his presence and be renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit, so we may do what Jesus commands and love one another.

(17:42) Prayers

Dear Lord, we do not find it easy to rejoice at this time, but cleanse our hearts and refresh our vision, so that we may see you more clearly, discover the joy of knowing that we matter to you, & fill our mouths with the words to praise and thank you. Amen

Almighty God, your ascended Son has sent us into this world,  
To preach the good news of your kingdom;  
Inspire us with your Spirit and pour the fire of your love into our hearts,  
that all who hear your call in your Word may be drawn to you,  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Father, may your name be truly honoured throughout our land.  
May your kingdom come, and the light of Christ shine forth among us afresh.  
May it bring peace and reconciliation in our homes and cities,  
truth, understanding and liberty in our schools and universities,  
healing in our hospitals, care homes and hospices,  
goodwill and honesty in our workplaces,  
and justice for all who are oppressed and persecuted.  
May the love of Christ enable us, your people, to give comfort and hope to the needy,  
practical help and support to the lonely and those who cannot help themselves,  
to the praise and glory of your name. Amen

**The Caleb Prayer**, *from the Ffald y Brenin House of Prayer*

O high King of Heaven, have mercy on our land.  
Revive your church. Send the Holy Spirit for the sake of the children.  
May your kingdom come to our nation, in Jesus mighty name. Amen

(19:30)Chorale Prelude “Heut' triumphieret Gottes Sohn”, BWV 630 – J.S. Bach

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