

Aria – Eric Smith

(2:46) Thoughts for the second Sunday after Trinity

The Collect and psalm are from the Book of Common Prayer; the readings from the Authorized version of the bible are those specified in the Common Worship Lectionary.

(2:58) The Collect

O Lord, who never failest to help and govern them who thou dost bring up in thy stedfast fear and love: Keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(3:21) Verses from Psalm 69

- 8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren:  
even an alien unto my mother's children.
- 9 For the zeal of thine house hath even eaten me:  
and the rebukes of them that rebuked thee are fallen upon me.
- 10 I wept, and chastened myself with fasting:  
and that was turned to my reproof.
- 11 I put on sackcloth also:  
and they jested upon me.
- 18 And hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble:  
O haste thee, and hear me.
- 19 Draw nigh unto my soul, and save it:  
O deliver me, because of mine enemies.
- 20 Thou hast known my reproof, my shame, and my dishonour:  
mine adversaries are all in thy sight.

(4:17) The Old Testament reading is written in the twentieth chapter of the book of the prophet Jeremiah beginning at the seventh verse:

- 7 O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.

- 8 For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.
- 9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.
- 10 For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.
- 11 But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.
- 12 But, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.
- 13 Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.

(6:08) The Epistle is written in the sixth chapter of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans beginning at the sixth verse:

- 1 Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
- 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?
- 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
- 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
- 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:
- 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
- 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.
- 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

- 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.
- 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.
- 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- (7:45) The Gospel is written in the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew beginning at the twenty fourth verse:
- 24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.
- 25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?
- 26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.
- 27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.
- 28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
- 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.
- 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
- 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.
- 32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.
- 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.
- 34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.
- 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.
- 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

(9:58) A 'Thought for the Week' from Bishop Rob Martin:

**Intro:** Do you find it easy being a Christian? Being one of God's people? Here in comfortable Britain, where we have more than enough food, free medical care, free education, social security and state pensions? Physically we are well protected. And spiritually, we can normally go to church without fear, to lovely church buildings and have access to good bible resources. Even in the Covid lockdown, we have internet available, clergy getting ever savvier in setting up services and a population where almost everyone uses the internet. So, it may indeed seem easy.

**But our readings today warn us of something different: following the Lord is tough. Look at what the psalmist said** in Psalm 69: zeal for your house consumes me (v9); he prays to the Lord (v13) and knows God's love and mercy (v16). He loves the Lord, trusts him, seeks to do his will, yet still pleads for God's help (v17/18) Why? Because people around him don't love the Lord and insult him. But those insults fall on him (v9). Following the Lord brings him suffering and rejection.

**Jeremiah says the same:** I've spoken the word of the Lord as he has directed me, I've obeyed the Lord, but this has brought me insult and reproach all day long (v20.9): people whisper against me and seek excuses to report me – suffering again for a servant of the Lord.

**And Jesus himself warns us: I haven't come to bring peace but a sword, and turn family relationships upside down!** Students seek to be like their teacher, and servants like their master (10.25), so we can expect to experience what Jesus did – suffering and rejection.

**Wow! What is going on?** Surely Jesus came to bring peace? To restore relationships and heal wounds? To give us life in all its abundance? And isn't that our experience? We do have inner peace because of what Jesus has done in winning forgiveness for us and his righteousness to cover our sinful hearts. We do, usually, love our family members. As a Christian, we don't get vilified or insulted in this country, even if elsewhere people most certainly do.

**Maybe, the clue lies in the reasons for being rejected.** For the zealous, godly psalmist, he faces people, who insult God and don't share his faith. For Jeremiah, he is warning them their godless behaviour will bring judgment. For Jesus, he stands against the powerful forces that controlled access to God, and challenged their power. And behind all

the rejection lay an unseen evil, namely the forces of this world that are hostile to God. He is not mentioned here, but behind the scenes lurks the devil, who feeds off the sinfulness in our hearts. That's the problem – sin.

**If it's easy for us to be Christians**, is it because we have somehow compromised with the world? We don't challenge its worldliness. Perhaps, we've become complacent, colluding with some values in society, which seem unchristian, keeping quiet when we might have spoken out, not wanting to rock the boat, because actually life is "ok" for us. Have we in fact been corrupted by the world around us, and don't recognise it? A couple of examples:

- **The Black Lives Matter** movement that has become so strong, speaking into centuries of oppression and racist attitudes. I assume I'm not racist, having spent so much time in Africa, but am I? I feel indignant at the thought of being accused of racism! But I am white, middle class. I need to truly examine my unconscious attitudes in the presence of my BAME friends. Do you?

- **Materialism**: we breathe it! Does it tempt us to get our homes just right, or have that holiday of a lifetime every few years? Do we use our God-given resources in godly ways, generous in all our dealings, seeking the Lord's will? The government encourages us now to spend, spend, spend to help our economy recover from Covid. Will we oblige selfishly, or increase our giving and helping?

**Paul warns us not to let our old self, which still lurks around, tempt us to let sin reign in our bodies.** (Romans 6.12). So, let's examine ourselves: Do we live "Christian lives?" Do we tell others about Jesus, risking hostility from those around us? **Probably not, but here's the good news!** God wants to transform us, and those around us. The psalmist knows God's love surrounds us and will save us. Jeremiah praises God, who rescues the needy. Paul says our old self is dead, crucified with Christ. **And Jesus says "Come follow me, don't be afraid,** God knows the very hairs on your head". So, are you ready to "lose your life for the sake of your Lord?" (Matt.10.39).

(15:38) Prelude and Fugue in G minor BWV558 – attributed to J S Bach

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