

Reflection & Newsletter St Mary's & St Augustine's:
Sunday 16th August - 10th Sunday after Trinity.

Sunday Bible readings: *Genesis 45: 1-15; Romans 11 : 12a 29-32; Psalm 67; Matthew 15: 21-28.*

Wednesday's Bible readings: *Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34 1-11; Matthew 20 : 1 – 16.*

Reflection for Sunday by Karen

The Psalm set for today - Psalm 67 is one which is regularly included as part of the liturgy of Morning Prayer. As I have become familiar with it I always find it to be a challenging reminder of how I am called to pray and to live. The first verse initially appears to be a prayer for God's blessing – perhaps a communal prayer at the conclusion of temple worship, and certainly a prayer many of us pray for ourselves and our churches and our nearest and dearest "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us," (Ps 67 : 1)

However we cannot stop at verse one because the prayer for Gods' blessing is far more than simply a request that we may be happy and healthy and able to enjoy life in a bubble of blessing, but rather we are called to ask for Gods' blessing SO THAT Gods ways and salvation might be known in all the earth (v.2). We are not asking to be blessed for our own sake but for the sake of the world and for the sake of Gods glory – "may all the people's praise you" (v3,5,7).

Today's passages from Isaiah and Matthew pick up the theme of all the nations coming to God in worship, and these verses also affirm that God's blessing and presence and salvation and healing is for all people. They also point us to where God's blessing is to be found – in justice and in salvation and in righteousness, and often blessing comes after a time of wrestling with God. The Canaanite Woman's persistence and being prepared to argue her case with Jesus is a verbal and theological form of wrestling with God, but it has the echoes of Genesis 32 : 22 -32 where Jacob physically wrestles with God, comes away impaired in his body but wrestles and will not let go until God blesses him. Likewise it can sometimes feel that we are wrestling with God sometimes that is physical, sometimes emotional, sometimes intellectual, sometimes theological, sometimes spiritual – or any combination.

So how might today's readings both encourage and challenge us as we reflect on them this week ?

The Psalm repeatedly reminds me, even as I do pray for God's blessing on my family and friends and church, and as I seek God's blessing, I also need to seek his kingdom, his justice his righteousness – there can't be one without the other, they are two sides of the same coin. Just as I live out my faith through a personal relationship with God – through prayer and study and worship so I must live out my faith in the rest of my life, to the world that is all around me. Each of us have our own particular settings – family, friends, work, social and community and residential. Each of us has our own particular ways of living our faith out – for some people this is political or pastoral or prophetic or environmental or a passion for equality or with those who are marginalized and disadvantaged..... We are called to be the carriers of God's blessings, to make the ways of God known, to be bearers of hope

and restoration and salvation, for this is what we have received ourselves through the blessings of God. Blessings which we too have wrestled for in many different ways.

Often as we gather at the Lord's table we recall the encounter between Jesus and the Canaanite Woman. We speak her words afresh as we approach God, and we can trust that just as Jesus engaged meaningfully with her, heard her and answered her, so it is for us today.

Prayer of Humble Access

We do not presume to come to this your Table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy so much
as to gather up the crumbs under your Table.
But you are the same Lord,
whose nature is always to have mercy:
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ,
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body,
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Collect for this Sunday

*Lord of heaven and earth,
as Jesus taught his disciples
to be persistent in prayer,
give us patience and courage
never to lose hope,
but always to bring
our prayers before you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Notices

St Augustine's Church will be holding a simple Communion service on:
Sunday 23rd August at 10.30am.

September services Sunday 13th and Sunday 27th at 10.30am

St Mary's Church will be **meeting outside** in August:

Sunday 16th August at 10.30am a short communion service followed by a picnic.

Sunday 30th August at 10.30am short communion service followed by a picnic.

September Services inside: Sunday 13th Sunday 27th Sept at 10.30am

Roots resources, prayers and reflections for adults, families and children for each Sunday <https://www.rootsontheweb.com/i-am-looking-for/public-copies/worshipathome16aug>

Revd. Claire Dawson cdawson@blueyonder.co.uk 0114 272 4987: Day off Friday

Revd. Karen Cribb revkaren@stmaryschurch.co.uk Mobile: 07580 378507: Day off Tuesday

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