



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 1 JUNE 2025 – Easter 7**

**COLLECT**

O God the King of glory,  
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ  
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:  
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,  
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us  
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Psalm 97**

1 The Lord is king: let the earth rejoice; ♦  
let the multitude of the isles be glad.  
2 Clouds and darkness are round about him; ♦  
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.  
3 Fire goes before him ♦  
and burns up his enemies on every side.  
4 His lightnings lit up the world; ♦  
the earth saw it and trembled.  
5 The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, ♦  
at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.  
6 The heavens declared his righteousness, ♦  
and all the peoples have seen his glory.  
7 Confounded be all who worship carved images  
and delight in mere idols. ♦  
Bow down before him, all you gods.  
8 Zion heard and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, ♦  
because of your judgements, O Lord.  
9 For you, Lord, are most high over all the earth; ♦  
you are exalted far above all gods.  
10 The Lord loves those who hate evil; ♦  
he preserves the lives of his faithful  
and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.  
11 Light has sprung up for the righteous ♦  
and joy for the true of heart.  
12 Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, ♦  
and give thanks to his holy name.

## A reading from the book of Acts, chapter 16, verses 16-34.

### Acts 16.16-34

#### Paul and Silas in Prison

One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, 'These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.' She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, 'I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And it came out that very hour.

But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market-place before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, 'These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe.' The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.' The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They answered, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.' They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in 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 John, chapter 17, verses 20-26.

***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.**

This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

**Alleluia.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John, chapter 17, verses 20-26.

**Glory to you, O Lord**

***And then at the end:***

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## John 17. 20-26

'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

'Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

## ***A Reflection from Hannah***

I wonder whether the Roman prison guard had ever met someone quite like Paul?! It's certainly clear by the end of this passage from the Acts of the Apostles that the jailer had undergone a life-changing experience, but I suspect Paul and Silas were not straightforward prisoners from the outset. We read that at 'about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God'. How irritating would that have been?! For the poor jailer, even before the earthquake there had been no peace- nothing but incessant calling on the name of the Lord. Annoying on the surface, but it was deeper than that- it meant that when the earthquake began, there was already a growing sense of the circumstance-defying love of God, who meets us *anywhere*, who can be praised *anywhere*- even in the miserable reality of being locked in stocks, beaten up and incarcerated.

And that unsteady of the 'usual' way of things is a large part of the message of this dramatic tale, it's a challenge to us. The way of Christ does disrupt the accepted norms of a society. Paul and Silas broke the business model of those who were enslaving the girl. They brought freedom to her, but ended the income of others. Following that, they refuse to be cowed or subdued by the consequences. Then, if that's not enough, there is divine intervention- a miracle in the night that terrifies the jailer, but also results in him and his household being baptised. And all this in what we call 'our time'- the time since Pentecost, the age of the Spirit, the life of the church.

It's enough to make us feel rather inadequate! But it is also a good challenge to us about the inevitability of disruption for the life of a Christian. It is not a path that ever promises settled comfort, as we seek to live a life of love in a world that has always been prone to redefining the word for its own gain. Sometimes this does mean standing up to what we know to be right, even if the consequences are serious.

This Thursday was Ascension Day. The ascension of Jesus shows us that he is in home on earth, *and* in heaven. As followers in the Way, we hope and pray that we too will live in both realms- always expectant of the unsteady power of God cracking open the most hopeless of situations. Those moments like the dramatic liberation of Paul and Silas out of chains are examples of heaven breaking through, bringing life and freedom. Let's be brave enough to pray for more of that.