



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2025 – Trinity 15

COLLECT

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit
upon your Church in the burning fire of your love:
grant that your people may be fervent
in the fellowship of the gospel
that, always abiding in you,
they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service;
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 146

1 Alleluia.

Praise the Lord, O my soul:
while I live will I praise the Lord; ♦
as long as I have any being,
I will sing praises to my God.

2 Put not your trust in princes,
nor in any human power, ♦
for there is no help in them.

3 When their breath goes forth, they return to the earth; ♦
on that day all their thoughts perish.

4 Happy are those who have the God of Jacob for their help, ♦
whose hope is in the Lord their God;

5 Who made heaven and earth,
the sea and all that is in them; ♦
who keeps his promise for ever;

6 Who gives justice to those that suffer wrong ♦
and bread to those who hunger.

7 The Lord looses those that are bound; ♦
the Lord opens the eyes of the blind;

8 The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; ♦
the Lord loves the righteous;

9 The Lord watches over the stranger in the land;
he upholds the orphan and widow; ♦
but the way of the wicked he turns upside down.

10 The Lord shall reign for ever, ♦
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations.
Alleluia.

A reading from Paul's first letter to Timothy, chapter 6, verses 6-19.

Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen.

As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

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 Luke, chapter 16, verses 19-31.

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.**

I am the way, the truth and the life, says the Lord. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke, chapter 16, verses 19-31.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

‘There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.” But Abraham said, “Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.” He said, “Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.” Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.” He said, “No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.” He said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.” ’

A Reflection from Hannah

One very rich man- Nelson Rockefeller- was once asked how much money is enough. 'A little more than I get' was his reply!

As we reflect on that, we get a glimpse of what Paul means with the phrase 'the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.' It's not that money is a bad thing in itself, but when it becomes the only factor that matters to us, then it has become an idol- and we find we have (as Paul puts it), wandered from the faith and pierced ourselves with many pains. Part and parcel of that wandering is the selfishness and greed that comes from our worrying that our money might be lost. And then everything simply becomes a commodity to serve us and keep us rich. The human face of another disappears. That's what's going on in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Even after death and in torment, the Rich Man still asks for Lazarus to come and serve him- he's still enslaved to the idol of money- he still thinks the world should bend for his own comfort. He's heart is still hardened, and he has learnt nothing, and it's a sorry sight.

And so... mindful of this risk, and as Christian people following Jesus, how might we respond? Well, Paul doesn't leave us hopeless. With blunt plain-speaking he reminds us of God's ways. And if the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is anything to go by, we need that reminder because we can become very, very stuck in our world view... even when all the evidence points to something else. In verse 11 Paul says 'but as for you, man of God, shun all this.' Some translations have the words 'run away from all this'. Run away from the pursuit of more- it's really hard to do in our day and age when the 'pursuit of more' is ubiquitous. It lurks in every advertising campaign, every marketing strategy. It's even found its way into the 'good' that we might do with our money- we are encouraged to donate to charity as we make our Amazon purchase, or to buy an object to show our allegiance to a good cause. It is taboo to question the very premise of 'the pursuit of more'.

And yet... as disciples, to question it is part of proclaiming the Gospel. Christ tells us that when we place our lives in his hands we have all that we need. We are asked to serve God alone, to have the courage to run from the pursuit of worldly wealth, and instead to chase after the good- to be rich in good works, generous and ready to share. Because we only have one, true king- and it is not money.

So this week, let's let that question linger, and remember to run! Running doesn't come naturally to many of us (!)- but remember Paul's words, especially as the world around us becomes more and more anxious, more risky, more precarious- run from a love of money. Run towards righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. 'Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called.' Seek God first, and remember the true king. And in doing that, we will, in word and deed, commend the Gospel, bless these times and see God's Kingdom come.