



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER 2025 – Trinity 18

COLLECT

Almighty and everlasting God,
increase in us your gift of faith
that, forsaking what lies behind
and reaching out to that which is before,
we may run the way of your commandments
and win the crown of everlasting joy;
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 121

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills; ♦
from where is my help to come?
2 My help comes from the Lord, ♦
the maker of heaven and earth.
3 He will not suffer your foot to stumble; ♦
he who watches over you will not sleep.
4 Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel ♦
shall neither slumber nor sleep.
5 The Lord himself watches over you; ♦
the Lord is your shade at your right hand,
6 So that the sun shall not strike you by day, ♦
neither the moon by night.
7 The Lord shall keep you from all evil; ♦
it is he who shall keep your soul.
8 The Lord shall keep watch over your going out
and your coming in, ♦
from this time forth for evermore.

A reading from Paul's second letter to Timothy, chapter 3, verses 14-4.5.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

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 18, verses 1-8.

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.**

We do not live by bread alone, but every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke, chapter 18, verses 1-8.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Grant me justice against my opponent." For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming." ' And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'

A Reflection from Dave

Somewhere in every train station, airport, or hospital, there will be a food vending machine. And for those who punch in the code and pay their money, there's a brief moment where you know that the machine should release the item you asked for, however the pause leaves you thinking "but will it...?"

Ultimately if the vending machine doesn't work, you might give it a good whack to get it going again! But what about when other things don't happen as we expect? What about when we pray, and we wait, and yet the thing we seek doesn't come to us? Does that mean our prayers are broken? Do we need to give God a good whack?

In our Gospel reading, Jesus' disciples have just been asking about "when" their prayers would be answered: when will God's Kingdom come, and when will his justice be done? They know what God should do, but when will it happen? Given the wars, divisions and needs in our world today, we might find ourselves also waiting for answers to those same prayers.

As he often does, Jesus responds with a story. A story about our "need to pray, and not lose heart". One that involves a bad judge, who doesn't care about God or people, or even a vulnerable widow who persistently comes to seek justice. Yet he eventually relents because of her unceasing asking. It's a story that poses a contrast: if even a bad judge gives justice when persistently asked, how much more will our good God help us when we ask for help?

Which sounds good in theory, but hard in practice! We can know that God is our helper, just like the writer of Psalm 121 knew that "his help came from the Lord", but we can still find ourselves waiting on this help. We often ask "when will help come", but the Psalmist offer us a different question. As he looks to the mountain where God should be, he asks "where does my help come from?"

"Where" prayers aren't seeking what God can give, as if he is a vending machine and our prayers are payment (or a reminding whack!). Instead, "where" prayers are seeking God and persistently relating to him even when life remains hard - "where are you God in the midst of this mess, this silence, this broken world?"

Jesus told his story seeking the kind of faith that "where" prayers ask. Faith that trusts God will help, even when doubt, pain, or trouble continues. Faith that persistently turns to God in prayer, even when our prayers aren't immediately answered.

Because in Jesus, the Son of Man, God has shown where he is: in the midst of our lives and troubles, as our helper, now and always. He remains with us, and affirms that when we keep praying, despite the waiting, we are on the right track, as those who know our "need to pray always and not to lose heart."