

Reflections & Prayers for Sunday
20 June 2021
Third Sunday after Trinity



Today's readings give us a whole series of unlikely events and even more unlikely outcomes: a heavily armed giant is defeated by a young lad; a flawed and sometimes pompous follower of Christ becomes the world's greatest missionary; a young man from Nazareth, empowered by God, walks on water and stills a storm. We are reminded yet again that our God is a powerful God – and that his power serves us in love and grace.



StJohnsAL5

www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Contents

Reading for this Sunday	p. 2
Reflection	p. 2-3
Prayers	p. 3-5
Parish Prayers	p. 5-6
Church Opening times	p. 6

Readings for this Sunday

You may want to find your Bible and read the lessons set for this week:

1 Samuel 17: 1-49	The story of David and Goliath
Psalms 9: 9-20	“The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed.”
2 Corinthians 6: 1-13	Do not accept the grace of God in vain
Mark 4: 35-end	Jesus stills the storm

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

Reflection

The Sea of Galilee is surrounded by hills, except for a valley dip at one end, which can act like a funnel for the wind. This means that the water can go from glassy calm to choppy white horses very quickly, as the wind whips up the water. As seasoned fishermen on this large freshwater lake, this will not have been the first time that the disciples have

experienced this phenomenon, but this time it was particularly severe. Their complaint to Jesus is about the apparent mismatch between their peril and his continuing nap: they do not cry, 'Help!' or 'Do something!', they question whether he cares. This is not a theoretical argument about whether he could (or should) intervene miraculously; it is not like the moment when the synagogue leaders stand at the sidelines to see whether he will heal someone on the sabbath. This is not a theoretical question about power at all. It is a cry from the heart, an exasperated rebuke from friends who feel abandoned: 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' Perhaps all they expect is another pair of hands to join in bailing out water from the boat. Instead, Jesus changes the vast space of the inland sea simply by speaking. Jesus' questions to them – 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' – underline that they still only have a sketchy picture of who he is. The miracle affects the disciples more than the storm did.

Perhaps the biggest question any of us ask of God and each other is the one that the disciples asked: 'Do you not care?' In the storms, God can seem to be asleep for us, and we can seem to be asleep for each other. How do we find a sense of being heard by God and others in these storms? When and how have we heard God in the storms of our lives?

Prayers

A prayer of approach

God of our ups and downs,
We pray in your name
with concerns in our hearts and questions in our minds,
with troubles in our lives and fears for our world.
We come trusting that you share our concerns and hear our questions,
embrace our troubles and know our fears.
We come trusting that you never give up on us,
that you never abandon us never dismiss us.
for you are a God of love, of peace and of power.
You are our God. Amen.

Prayers for others

Your powerful presence comforts us, O God, for when we are threatened by chaos and storm, Christ is our peace: Hear us as we call to you, and answer our prayers as we say: You are a refuge in time of trouble; you never forsake those who seek you, O God.

Loving One, your Church works together with Christ to accept your grace for all people: Fill us with purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and your Godly power, that there may be no fault found with our ministry.

You are a refuge in time of trouble; you never forsake those who seek you, O God.

Eternal One, you are known by your acts of justice: Let your goodness be sustained by all who hold authority in the nations, and let not the ungodly have the upper hand; for the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever. You are a refuge in time of trouble; you never forsake those who seek you, O God.

Gracious One, your peace dwells continually at the centre of our being: Give peace to all whose lives are swamped by waves and winds, and defend those who face giant threats, that they may know the comfort of your presence and face their troubles with David's courage.

You are a refuge in time of trouble; you never forsake those who seek you, O God.

Compassionate One, help us to commend ourselves in this community with hearts wide open to our neighbours for your Name's sake.

You are a refuge in time of trouble; you never forsake those who seek you, O God.

Ever-Present One, at an acceptable time you have listened to us – now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation:

Hear our prayers for those for whom we intercede, especially ____.

We tell of all your praises and rejoice in your salvation as we bring our prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving, especially for ____.

Bring into your eternal peace those who have died, especially ____.

You are a refuge in time of trouble; you never forsake those who seek you, O God.

Gracious and Loving Father, be known to us in the storms and anxieties of our lives, that we may hear the call of our Saviour saying "Peace! Be still!" and may be calm in his presence through the power of the Holy Spirit, for you live and reign, One God, for ever and ever. Amen.

A prayer of thanksgiving

God of power and peace, when the storm is raging,

You are there.

When our boats are sinking,

You are there.

When faith slips through our fingertips,

You are there.

When our hearts sink and our courage fails,

You are there.

In the roar of the waves,

In the sound of the wind,
and in the silence,
You are there.
So I praise you.
I thank you.
I worship you.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

A blessing for today:

Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation. There is nothing standing in the way of your union with God.

Let the presence of Jesus at the centre of your heart speak peace to you in the midst of your fears.

"Peace! Be still!" The Holy Spirit breathes the loving calm of divine life within you and over you. Be not afraid.

And the blessing of our powerful God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you and comfort you, now and for ever. Amen.

Parish Prayers for the week ahead

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer:

Sunday	The Church of North India (United)
Monday	The Diocese of Chotanagpur – The (united) Church of North India
Tuesday	The Diocese of Christ the King – The Anglican Church of Southern Africa
Wednesday	The Diocese of Christchurch – The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia
Thursday	The Diocese of Chubu – The Anglican Episcopal Church in Japan
Friday	The Diocese of Clogher – The Church of Ireland
Saturday	The Diocese on the Coast – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:

Sunday	Parish of Heath and Reach with Egginton (Deanery of Dunstable)
Monday	Parish of Hockliffe (Deanery of Dunstable)
Tuesday	Parish of Houghton Regis (Deanery of Dunstable)
Wednesday	Parish of Kensworth (Deanery of Dunstable)
Thursday	Parish of Leighton Buzzard (Deanery of Dunstable)
Friday	Parish of Linslade (Deanery of Dunstable)
Saturday	Parish of Sandhills, Church of the Good Shepherd (Conventional District) (Deanery of Dunstable)

For the homes and families in:

Sunday	Sherwoods Rise, Sibley Avenue
Monday	Southdown Road, Stonehurst Court
Tuesday	Tarrant Drive, Tiverton Court
Wednesday	Topstreet Way, The Uplands
Thursday	Vallance Place, Walkers Close
Friday	Walkers Court, Walkers Road
Saturday	The Warren, Welbeck Rise

The Sick:

Claire, Sue, Christine, Hermione, Karen, Chris and all whose names are entered on our St Luke's Cell Prayer List.

On their year's mind:

Elisabeth Gillett, John Rogers, Marjory Mitchell, David Freeman, Anne Best, Sylvia Coggan, Peggy Linsell, Thomas Fleet.

Church Opening times

Other services / in Church congregation

- Evening Prayer on Wednesdays at 5.00pm
- Sunday 9.30am Parish Eucharist
- Short family service this Sunday 20 June & Sunday 18 July at 4.00pm

Private Prayer

- Saturday opening (in addition to Sunday), 11.00am – 4.00pm

Church at home:

We are delighted to produce each week these printed papers. If you would prefer not to receive these papers each week, please let Julie in the parish office know. If you are aware of others in the parish who would also value the opportunity to worship at home in this way, do please contact a member of the Ministry team or Julie (Parish Office Tel: 01582 712776).

A reminder... of this phone service:

Daily Hope – dial 0800 804 8044 for prayer, reflection, music and worship services from the Church of England. A weekly service is available from 9 am every Sunday.



Our Reflection and prayers this week are from the Scripture Union and from the Revd Lowell Grisham.