



**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

**10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity**

**The Beacon Parishes Mission Community of Ipplepen with Torbryan,  
Denbury, Broadhempston and Woodland**

### **COLLECT**

Let your merciful ears, O Lord,  
be open to the prayers of your humble servants;  
and that they may obtain their petitions  
make them to ask such things as shall please you;  
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.

### **FIRST READING**

**Genesis 45.1-15**

#### **Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers**

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, 'Send everyone away from me.' So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer to me.' And they came closer. He said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, "Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty." And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father how greatly I am honoured in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.' Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

## **PSALM**

### **Psalm 133**

#### **The Blessedness of Unity**

A Song of Ascents.

How very good and pleasant it is  
when kindred live together in unity!  
It is like the precious oil on the head,  
running down upon the beard,  
on the beard of Aaron,  
running down over the collar of his robes.  
It is like the dew of Hermon,  
which falls on the mountains of Zion.  
For there the LORD ordained his blessing,  
life for evermore.

## **SECOND READING**

### **Romans 11.1-2a, 29-32**

#### **Israel's Rejection Is Not Final**

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

## **GOSPEL**

### **Matthew 15.10-28**

#### **Things That Defile**

Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, 'Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.' Then the disciples approached and said to him, 'Do you know that the Pharisees took offence when they heard what you said?' He answered, 'Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.' But Peter said to him, 'Explain this parable to us.' Then he said, 'Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.'

#### **The Canaanite Woman's Faith**

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.' He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly.

## **REFLECTION ON JESUS' ENCOUNTER WITH THE CANAANITE WOMAN (MATTHEW 15:21-28) BY HILLARIE GRIGGS**

The gospel story of Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman in Tyre and Sidon has the ability to disturb and make us feel uncomfortable. All our sympathy tends to go towards the woman whose daughter is clearly suffering and this is causing her a great deal of distress. She is described as being tormented by a demon. When the woman asks Jesus for help, believing that he will be able to cure her daughter, his first reaction is to ignore her. This is not our normal image of Jesus doing everything to help everyone. How could he be so unkind as to not react to someone's suffering? Where is his compassion so clearly illustrated in so many other stories we read about him? When she persists in asking for help it appears that Jesus is refusing to help because she comes from a different race as he answers her by saying, "I have only been sent to the lost sheep of Israel." Where is that friend to all? This Jesus is not very likeable, it makes us uncomfortable because we struggle and are perplexed by his response. We are uncomfortable with the idea that an outsider is teaching Jesus what it means to embrace the fullness of the mission of God and she appears to change his mind.

The disciples' behaviour also does not present them in a favourable light. In this encounter they show a distinct lack of compassion. They are annoyed by someone who is outside their own group so they keep telling Jesus to send her away because they are tired of hearing her cries for help. They had gone to this area to get away from the mounting hostility of the religious leaders and were protecting themselves. Why would the gospel writers, Matthew and Mark, include this story when it does not show anyone in a good light? What is it meant to be teaching us?

Maybe reflecting on what information Matthew gives and where in his gospel he places this story can give us a better understanding of why this encounter has been recorded and what we have to learn from it. Matthew's main audience would have had a good knowledge and acceptance of Old Testament scripture. By describing the woman as a Canaanite, his readers would know that her people were ancient enemies of Israel. Matthew's first readers would identify this woman as being an outsider and as being unclean.

Matthew places this story during the time when Jesus is defining his mission. The disciple, and therefore the readers, are beginning to see who he is. Jesus is no longer in Jewish territory but it is in this foreign land that a woman greets him with the messianic title "Son of David". She recognises who he is. Even when she is ignored and the disciples want to send her away, she does not give up. She kneels before him as a sign of his kingship and his authority. She recognises that he possesses power over evil, that he can rid her daughter of her demon.

At last her persistence is rewarded and Jesus strikes up a conversation with her, but only to tell her that his focus must be on the lost sheep of Israel and he likens her to a family dog begging for crumbs at the table. The woman does not disagree, she does not claim a place of privilege, but states that, like the dog, she will accept whatever is left over. She manages to shift herself from being an outsider to being part of the family, albeit an inferior one, the family pet. She shows Jesus that she recognises his primary ministry, but reminds him that she is still part of the greater family of God and that, by being satisfied with the crumbs, she is not depriving the children at all. She is not trying to thwart his mission but recognises that Jesus has so much power that even a "small leftover crumb" of it would be all that was needed to defeat the demon that possessed her daughter. This story is sandwiched between Jesus' feeding of two large crowds (five thousand and four thousand) where there were plenty of crumbs left over.

It was this faith that Jesus praised. She had understood what others had failed to grasp, that it was through Israel that God would bring his hope to the whole world. This is why Jesus was insistent that his primary mission was to the house of Israel, because all through the Old Testament, God himself had promised that his kingdom and new life would come about through his chosen people. The lost sheep of Israel had to hear the good news first. Maybe it was in this encounter that Jesus saw his greater mission, that he was to bring God's blessing to the whole world. Certainly through this encounter with the outsider we can get a glimpse of the future, where all are accepted. It also prepares the reader for Jesus' great commission to go and to make disciples of all the nations.

I think we can learn something from watching Jesus in this situation. When we are seeking God's will for our lives either individually, as a church community, or as a mission community we may think we know what we're supposed to do on any particular day. However, if we are prepared to listen to the Holy Spirit, we might be

confronted with circumstances that can shift our perspective and make us realise God wants us to do something we hadn't planned on. And those circumstances might even come in the form of an encounter with an annoying stranger!

## **POST COMMUNION**

God of our pilgrimage,  
you have willed that the gate of mercy  
should stand open for those who trust in you:  
look upon us with your favour  
that we who follow the path of your will  
may never wander from the way of life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.