



## God's Word for this Week

### Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020

*The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity*

#### *The Collect* *of the Fourteenth Sunday after Easter*

Almighty God,  
whose only Son has opened for us  
a new and living way into your presence:  
Give us pure hearts and steadfast wills  
to worship you in spirit and in truth,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### *The Old Testament Reading*

#### *Exodus 14: 19-31*

<sup>19</sup> The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. <sup>20</sup> It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was

there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night. <sup>21</sup> Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. <sup>22</sup> The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. <sup>23</sup> The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. <sup>24</sup> At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. <sup>25</sup> He clogged\* their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.'

<sup>26</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.'

<sup>27</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. <sup>28</sup> The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. <sup>29</sup> But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

<sup>30</sup> Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. <sup>31</sup> Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

This challenging Scripture continues the story of Moses leading the Israelite people out of captivity and achieving the seemingly impossible with God's guidance. Some would agree that one of the most dangerous things with regard to our faith is to lack the belief that God can do impossible things. Can you recall a moment in your life that, it seemed, could only go one way but circumstances were turned around? Perhaps even as a result of prayer?

Father, renew our faith in you as wonderful creator of this world and our belief that nothing is impossible for you!

## The Epistle

## Romans 14: 1-12

<sup>14</sup>Welcome those who are weak in faith,\* but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions. <sup>2</sup>Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. <sup>3</sup>Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. <sup>4</sup>Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord\* is able to make them stand.

<sup>5</sup> Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. <sup>6</sup>Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God.

<sup>7</sup> We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. <sup>8</sup>If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup>For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

<sup>10</sup> Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister?\* Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister?\* For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God.\* <sup>11</sup>For it is written,  
'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,  
and every tongue shall give praise to\* God.'  
<sup>12</sup>So then, each of us will be accountable to God."

The writer of the letter to the Romans digs deeper than the quarrelling taking place between fasting, keeping sabbath and acceptable foods in uniting his readers in the fact that they are the Lord's first and foremost! Now, more than ever, we are united in a common and much clearer understanding of our shared humanity.

Heavenly Father, it is often too easy for us to pass judgement on other people who may not see 'eye-to-eye' with us. Help us to reflect, even for a short while, on the fact that we are all your children and all learning our way forward. Let this knowledge bring about a greater and broader understanding of each person's individual journey and how you draw all people and all things to yourself.

## The Gospel

## Matthew 18: 21-35

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church\* sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven\* times.<sup>23</sup> 'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents\* was brought to him;<sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made.<sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii;\* and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister\* from your heart.'

Something changes in us when good is done to or for us. It's a knock-on effect. It is through the action of kindnesses done to us that we learn kindness and through receiving that we learn to give. This isn't always the case. Sometimes, caught up in the moment, we may forget that we ourselves were in similar situations or went wrong in the past and our debt was forgiven us.

Father, you remind us today that It's never too late to make amends and whole hearted forgiveness towards us should give us cause to reflect and react in a similar forgiving way when the need arises.

## Psalm 114

- 1 When Israel came out of Egypt, ♦  
the house of Jacob from a people of a strange tongue,
- 2 Judah became his sanctuary, ♦  
Israel his dominion.
- 3 The sea saw that, and fled; ♦  
Jordan was driven back.
- 4 The mountains skipped like rams, ♦  
the little hills like young sheep.
- 5 What ailed you, O sea, that you fled? ♦  
O Jordan, that you were driven back?
- 6 You mountains, that you skipped like rams, ♦  
you little hills like young sheep?
- 7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, ♦  
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
- 8 Who turns the hard rock into a pool of water, ♦  
the flint-stone into a springing well.