

God's Word for this week

28TH AUGUST 2020

The Calling



The Collect of the Day (The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity)

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire, or deserve:
Pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid,
and giving us those good things
which we are not worthy to ask
save through the merits and mediation
of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

The First Reading

Exodus 3: 1-15

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ²There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. ³Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' ⁴When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' ⁵Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' ⁶He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.



⁷ Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' ¹¹But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' ¹²He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.'

¹³ But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' ¹⁴ God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I am has sent me to you." ' ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "The Lord,* the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you": This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations.

This encounter between Moses and God is beautifully described in Scripture. It is a dramatic event which begins the journey towards the release of the Israelites from Egypt. It comes at a time in Moses' life when he seems to be plain sailing. After a dramatic start to his life and the murder of an Egyptian soldier at his own hand; farming life has steadied Moses and it's interesting to note that a burning bush in such stark hot places as frequented by Moses and his flock was no unusual. Yet Moses was inquisitive enough to turn aside and look! Our journey towards the transformation and joy that can be brought about by God starts with a seeking heart; a heart that's ready to listen and take action, despite any initial reservations.

Again we hear that God does not choose perfection, rather he draws us forward into a better understanding of truth. What are the moments in your life where you have encountered God in either dramatic or seemingly mundane ways? Perhaps part of the mystery of prayer is to simply call them to mind in gratitude this day.

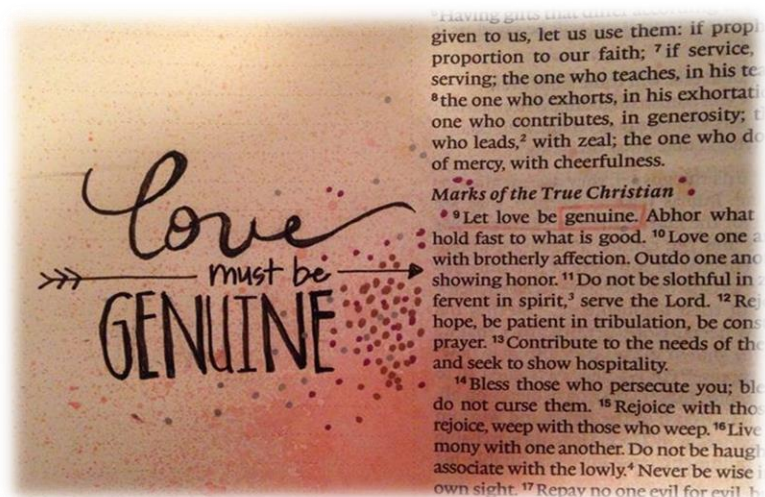
The Second Reading

Romans 12: 9-21

⁹ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.* ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly;* do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God;* for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' ²⁰ No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Recently I read an article in which a man spoke of our highest selves as high frequencies in our life energy. We all know the feeling of excitement and pure joy. These, according to this opinion, are when we are at our best and most open to our higher selves. The advice given was that we should follow whatever makes us happy and joyous, what comes naturally to us as our gifts in life, whenever we can without seeking to know the outcome; and to remain positive. If we read through the instructions in the letter above we may find them rather difficult to maintain and this would be perfectly normal! Being a Christian requires enormous strength but the secret underlying theme to the piece today is positivity. Perhaps, as a prayer you could read it again with 'positivity' in mind and placing 'I will..' in front of each instruction.



The Gospel Reading

Matthew 16: 21-28

21 From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.'²³ But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.²⁶ For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

27 'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.²⁸ Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'



Once again it is Peter who speaks out and gets himself into difficult waters with Jesus. This is a turning point in St. Matthew's Gospel as Jesus begins to prepare his disciples for what is to lie ahead his death and resurrection. It's understandable that Peter would be distraught about this revelation. No doubt the disciples have grown to deeply love the Lord. This day consider exactly what is being asked of you as a follower of Christ. Reflect again on the words of Romans. Jesus is also taking another opportunity to point out that the wordly and spiritual are completely different. Losing our life as we know it in this world is gaining a deeper insight into our spiritual selves through Christ. The Life that Jesus speaks of is eternal.

Father, this day we give thanks for the resilience and courage of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We thank you that he has called us individually to be his disciples too. Open our hearts to receive him that we may walk with him through every moment and gain the life he promises us here on this earth and for all eternity. Amen.



Are you brave enough
to draw closer to the fire,
to tread on Holy Ground
and follow where you are led?

God says 'I will be with you'