

Psalm and Readings Tuesday 5th July 2022

Psalm 73

Truly God is good to the upright,
to those who are pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled;
my steps had nearly slipped.
For I was envious of the arrogant;
I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

For they have no pain;
their bodies are sound and sleek.
They are not in trouble as others are;
they are not plagued like other people.
Therefore pride is their necklace;
violence covers them like a garment.
Their eyes swell out with fatness;
their hearts overflow with follies.
They scoff and speak with malice;
loftily they threaten oppression.
They set their mouths against heaven,
and their tongues range over the earth.

Therefore the people turn and praise them,
and find no fault in them.
And they say, 'How can God know?
Is there knowledge in the Most High?'
Such are the wicked;
always at ease, they increase in riches.
All in vain I have kept my heart clean
and washed my hands in innocence.
For all day long I have been plagued,
and am punished every morning.

If I had said, 'I will talk on in this way',
I would have been untrue to the circle of your
children.
But when I thought how to understand this,
it seemed to me a wearisome task,
until I went into the sanctuary of God;
then I perceived their end.
Truly you set them in slippery places;
you make them fall to ruin.
How they are destroyed in a moment,
swept away utterly by terrors!

They are like a dream when one awakes;
on awaking you despise their phantoms.

When my soul was embittered,
when I was pricked in heart,
I was stupid and ignorant;
I was like a brute beast towards you.
Nevertheless I am continually with you;
you hold my right hand.
You guide me with your counsel,
and afterwards you will receive me with
honour.

Whom have I in heaven but you?
And there is nothing on earth that I desire
other than you.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my
portion for ever.

Indeed, those who are far from you will perish;
you put an end to those who are false to you.
But for me it is good to be near God;
I have made the Lord God my refuge,
to tell of all your works.

Judges 9:1-21

Now Abimelech son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to his mother's kinsfolk and said to them and to the whole clan of his mother's family, 'Say in the hearing of all the lords of Shechem, "Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal rule over you, or that one rule over you?" Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh.' So his mother's kinsfolk spoke all these words on his behalf in the hearing of all the lords of Shechem; and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, 'He is our brother.' They gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the temple of Baal-berith with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless fellows, who followed him. He went to his father's house at Ophrah, and killed his brothers the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, on one stone; but Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, survived, for he hid himself. Then all the lords of Shechem and all Beth-millo came together, and they went and made Abimelech king, by the oak of the pillar at Shechem.

When it was told to Jotham, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and cried aloud and said to them, 'Listen to me, you lords of Shechem, so that God may listen to you.

The trees once went out
to anoint a king over themselves.
So they said to the olive tree,
"Reign over us."
The olive tree answered them,
"Shall I stop producing my rich oil
by which gods and mortals are honoured,
and go to sway over the trees?"
Then the trees said to the fig tree,
"You come and reign over us."
But the fig tree answered them,
"Shall I stop producing my sweetness
and my delicious fruit,
and go to sway over the trees?"
Then the trees said to the vine,
"You come and reign over us."
But the vine said to them,
"Shall I stop producing my wine
that cheers gods and mortals,
and go to sway over the trees?"
So all the trees said to the bramble,
"You come and reign over us."
And the bramble said to the trees,
"If in good faith you are anointing me king over
you,
then come and take refuge in my shade;
but if not, let fire come out of the bramble
and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

'Now therefore, if you acted in good faith and honour when you made Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done to him as his actions deserved—for my father fought for you, and risked his life, and rescued you from the hand of Midian; but you have risen up against my father's house this day, and have killed his sons, seventy men on one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his slave-woman, king over the lords of Shechem, because he is your kinsman—if, I say, you have acted in good faith and honour towards Jerubbaal and towards his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you; but if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the lords of Shechem, and Beth-millo; and let fire come out from the lords of Shechem, and from Beth-millo, and devour Abimelech.' Then

Jotham ran away and fled, going to Beer, where he remained for fear of his brother Abimelech.

Luke 15:11-end

Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

'Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat

so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."