

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

Moses spoke to the people: ‘Obey the voice of the LORD your God, keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

‘For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off.

It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?”

Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?”

But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.’

THE WORD OF THE LORD

THE RESPONSE TO THE PSALM IS:

Seek God, you who are poor, and your hearts will revive.

I pray to you, O LORD,

at an acceptable time.

In your great mercy, answer me, O God,

with your faithful salvation.

LORD, answer, for your mercy is kind;

in your great compassion, turn toward me.

Seek God, you who are poor, and your hearts will revive.

As for me in my poverty and pain,

let your salvation, O God, raise me up.

Then I will praise God's name with a song;

I will glorify him with thanksgiving.

Seek God, you who are poor, and your hearts will revive.

The poor when they see it will be glad,

and God-seeking hearts will revive;

for the LORD attends to the needy,

and does not spurn his own in their chains.

Seek God, you who are poor, and your hearts will revive.

For God will bring salvation to Sion, and rebuild the cities of Judah.

The children of his servants shall inherit it; those who love his name shall dwell there.

Seek God, you who are poor, and your hearts will revive.

THE SECOND READING IS FROM THE LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

Christ Jesus is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation.

For by him all things were created,
in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,
whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities —
all things were created through him and for him.

And he is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the Church.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,
that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through him to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
making peace by the blood of his cross.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia.

Your words, O Lord, are Spirit and life;
you have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia.

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

At that time: Behold, a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying,
‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’

He said to him, ‘What is written in the Law? How do you read it?’

And he answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.’ And he said to him, ‘You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.’

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’ Jesus replied, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.

Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was,
and when he saw him, he had compassion.

He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

And the next day he took out two denarii
and gave them to the innkeeper, saying,
“Take care of him, and whatever more you spend,
I will repay you when I come back.”

Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?’

He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’
And Jesus said to him, ‘You go, and do likewise.’

THE REFLECTION

Walking with dogs a few years ago Millie the Spaniel would lead them into the woods, Valerie the lurcher was taller and so would divert to another path, Charlie the broad shouldered Collie cross would charge through bushes and go in a different direction. We would follow them as best we could as the path was narrow and sometimes shared with a horse and rider. Trees and bushes on either side meant it was difficult to see far. Just like the road from Jerusalem to Jericho in Jesus' time before the drought which dried up much of the eastern mediterranean.

The solo traveller could not have seen where the robbers were coming from and was attacked. The priest and Levite probably thought the robbers might be nearby and got away as fast as they could. The Samaritan and his donkey stopped to help despite religious and racial division between Samaritans and Jews the injured man would have been very grateful.

It is in our hearts and minds to respect life and the needs of others. as noted in the book of Deuteronomy. Jesus fulfilling the meaning of the law tells us Blessed be the merciful. Sometimes this comes at a cost and personal risk, so it is necessary to decide whether to help and how.

In the 4th century An Egyptian Christian wrote about how a rich man can be saved, this was the beginning of the tradition that you needed enough to support your family, to maintain your role in society and what you can then afford to give to those in need.

Our feelings come into our calculations as well, animal charities such as the donkey sanctuary do well on this rating. A wounded or collapsed person who is smartly dressed might cause us to ring for an ambulance but a poorly dressed one might be dismissed as a drug user or heavy drinker.

Our good habits or virtues are part of ourselves. They grow with practice and make us feel better about ourselves. I am enjoying reading Clare Pooley's "The sober diaries" about how she stopped drinking wine so much and it changed her, overcoming her (and often my) fear that she might be less fun , in her words more a drain on others energy rather than a radiator warming up peoples hearts and

minds. She discovers she is still popular but also a lot less self-focussed and feels better about herself. She is never completely away from temptation and it is a slow journey for her. Anyone of us can be more generous, overcoming fear of loss and rejoicing in what is good within us.