

Readings for the Second Sunday after Pentecost

7th June 2026

First Reading: Hosea 5:15-6:6

Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Israel:

I will return again to my place

until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face.

In their distress they will beg my favour:

“Come, let us return to the Lord,

for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us;

he has struck down, and he will bind us up.

After two days he will revive us;

on the third day he will raise us up,

that we may live before him.

Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord;

his appearing is as sure as the dawn;

he will come to us like the showers,

like the spring rains that water the earth.”

What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?

What shall I do with you, O Judah?

Your love is like a morning cloud,

like the dew that goes away early.

Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets;

I have killed them by the words of my mouth,

and my judgment goes forth as the light.

For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,

the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

Second Reading: Romans 4:13-25

The promise that Abraham would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, ‘I have made you the father of many nations’) – Abraham believed in the presence of the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become ‘the father of many nations,’ according to what was said, ‘So numerous shall your

descendants be.’ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith ‘was reckoned to him as righteousness.’

Now the words, ‘it was reckoned to him,’ were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Gospel: St Matthew 9:9-13,18-26

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he got up and followed him.

And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?’ But when he heard this, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.’

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, ‘My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.’ And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, ‘If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.’ Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, ‘Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.’ And instantly the woman was made well. When Jesus came to the leader’s house and saw the flute-players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, ‘Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping.’ And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.

A Reflection for the second Sunday after Pentecost

from Rev’d Anne Macdonald

In the past few weeks, we have reached the end of the Easter Season, commemorated Christ’s ascension to heaven, and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Last week we celebrated the mystery that is the Trinity. Now we enter into that period sometimes called Ordinary Time, and of course there is nothing ordinary about it if we believe in Jesus Christ, but it is that part of the year without great festivals, although there are days of celebration and commemoration of the saints who have walked this path before us. The 17th century poet George Herbert in his poem ‘Prayer’ coined the phrase ‘Heaven in Ordinary’ for this time – a time to experience the grace of God in the minutiae of life. A time of year when our readings turn to the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus.

So today our Gospel reading shows us Jesus in the midst of the people as he guides them to God. As always there are two other readings supporting the Gospel. The Old Testament reading is from the prophet Hosea who lived in the

northern Kingdom of Israel. After the death of Solomon, the land the tribes of Israel occupied was divided, and Hosea was particularly concerned about affairs in the northern kingdom. Many of the people there had turned away from God to worship Baal, not for the first time, and led a life which was far removed from the one God had encouraged them to follow. As well, the kingdom was under attack by the Assyrians at that time. In this passage we hear a call to repentance, for the people to return to the Lord who will heal them and a reminder that God looks for his people to have steadfast love and knowledge of him. The reference to burnt offerings is both about the religion associated with Baal and the common practice from that time of offering sacrifices to God in order to seek his favour. Hosea is calling the people to live according to God's will. Yes, follow the commandments but be loyal, know what is important and seek to be the best you can. Do not look for shortcuts, like offering sacrifices, without amending your conduct. For God knows what humanity is like.

Then in Romans we hear a similar message from Paul. He looks back more than 2,000 years to Abraham and refers to Abraham's faith in God. According to Paul this faith is what made the covenant possible. The promise from God is based on grace, not right, and grace was present because of Abraham's faith. The covenant descends to all who share the faith of Abraham, that is, faith in God. So, it descends to us. But Paul is clear faith is more than adherence to the law, the Torah, it is about believing in and trusting God and in Christ whom he raised from the dead.

So, these two readings give us a sense of God's desire for us to come to him. He does not force us to do this but asks us to turn to him in faith. He knows all of human weakness but still holds out his hand to us and we see this in these well-known stories from Mathew's Gospel. The first story is about the calling of Mathew himself. He was a tax collector. We do not know what sort of person he was before he met Jesus. What we do know is that his job was one which frequently involved exploitation and dishonesty, but when Jesus called him, he got up and followed him. He became a disciple, his presence among Jesus's followers challenging the pharisees who despised Mathew, his friends, and Jesus for consorting with people like that. Jesus is inviting all people to come to God. Later at dinner Jesus told the Pharisees that he was here for those who were sinners and that they needed to understand this and apply it to those around themselves. 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' This is the same message that God had Hosea relay to the people of Israel. That he, God, requires more of us than ostentatious adherence to the law.

Then in the next cameo we have a leader of the Synagogue, named as Jarius in Mark, pleading with Jesus to help his little daughter. Jesus does not admonish the man as he did with the Pharisees, no he goes with the man because he has shown faith by coming to Jesus. This man has not stood on his dignity. He loves his daughter and, in his despair, turns to Jesus. He is asking for God's grace for his daughter for his love of her. I think we should be in no doubt that in doing this he risked the wrath of the Pharisees and others. Remember how Nicodemus crept in to see Jesus in the middle of the night for fear of his fellow leaders.

Thirdly we have the woman who had been ill for a long time, who touches Jesus's cloak and is healed. She had faith but thought she was of no value - why would someone like Jesus pay attention to her. In spite of what she thought about herself Jesus turned round and talked to her.

In this Gospel passage we have those who think they are better than others, those who think they are less worthy and a man who stands up against his fellow leaders for the love of his family. A snapshot of humanity. We see Jesus publicly valuing people who are deemed to be unimportant or worse by the society they live in. We see him standing beside someone who risks his social standing by imploring Jesus for help. Now we could possibly reach the conclusion

from this that all that God requires of us is faith but that would be an oversimplification of these readings and a failure to set them in context. Yes, with the exception of the Pharisees, these people came in faith, and Jesus healed them in the sense of giving them life through him and as Paul explained faith is a conduit for God's grace. But Jesus did not write off the Pharisees, he challenged them to go away and think about their attitude to others, about assuming that they were superior and saved because of their lifestyle. There is an echo of 'Love your neighbour as yourself' in this and also a wish to bring all to God.

So how does this relate to our lives and times? In this age Christians no longer have a right to be heard, if they ever did, but we are still called on to not look inwards to the church but outwards to the world and to stand with the marginalised, those without value in our society. To question ourselves and like Jarius let others see that our lives are built on faith. To live our lives by walking with Christ day by day and through that we might as George Herbert said, find Heaven in Ordinary.