

Monday 18th September

Psalm 30

¹ I will exalt you, LORD, for you lifted me out of the depths
and did not let my enemies gloat over me.

² **LORD my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me.**

³ You, LORD, brought me up from the realm of the dead;
you spared me from going down to the pit.

⁴ **Sing the praises of the LORD, you his faithful people;
praise his holy name.**

⁵ For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favour lasts a lifetime;
weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

⁶ **When I felt secure, I said, ‘I shall never be shaken.’**

⁷ LORD, when you favoured me, you made my royal mountain stand firm;
but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.

⁸ **To you, LORD, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy:**

⁹ ‘What is gained if I am silenced, if I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness?

¹⁰ **Hear, LORD, and be merciful to me; LORD, be my help.’**

¹¹ You turned my wailing into dancing;
you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,

¹² **that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent.
LORD my God, I will praise you for ever.**

Mark 11;1-11

Jesus comes to Jerusalem as king

11 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ² saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone asks you, “Why are you doing this?” say, “The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.”’

⁴ They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵ some people standing there asked, ‘What are you doing, untying that colt?’ ⁶ They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. ⁷ When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others

spread branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

‘Hosanna!’ ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’

¹⁰ ‘Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!’

‘Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

¹¹ Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Tuesday 19th September

Psalm 36

I have a message from God in my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before their eyes.

² **In their own eyes they flatter themselves
too much to detect or hate their sin.**

³ The words of their mouths are wicked and deceitful;
they fail to act wisely or do good.

⁴ **Even on their beds they plot evil; they commit themselves to a sinful
course and do not reject what is wrong.**

⁵ Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.

⁶ **Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the
great deep. You, LORD, preserve both people and animals.**

⁷ How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!

People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

⁸ **They feast in the abundance of your house;
you give them drink from your river of delights.**

⁹ For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

¹⁰ **Continue your love to those who know you,
your righteousness to the upright in heart.**

¹¹ May the foot of the proud not come against me,
nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.

¹² **See how the evildoers lie fallen – thrown down, not able to rise!**

Mark 11;12-26

Jesus curses a fig-tree and clears the temple courts

¹² The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. ¹³ Seeing in the distance a fig-tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ Then he said to the tree, ‘May no one ever eat fruit from you again.’ And his disciples heard him say it.

¹⁵ On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶ and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷ And as he taught them, he said, ‘Is it not written: “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations”? But you have made it “a den of robbers”.’

¹⁸ The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

¹⁹ When evening came, Jesus and his disciples^[e] went out of the city.

²⁰ In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig-tree withered from the roots. ²¹ Peter remembered and said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, look! The fig-tree you cursed has withered!’

²² ‘Have faith in God,’ Jesus answered. ²³ ‘Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, “Go, throw yourself into the sea,” and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them.

²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵ And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.’

Wednesday 20th September

Psalm 34

I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.

² I will glory in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

³ Glorify the LORD with me: let us exalt his name together.

**⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.**

⁵ Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.

⁶ This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;

he saved him out of all his troubles.

⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.

**⁸ Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.**

⁹ Fear the LORD, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing.

**¹⁰ The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.**

¹¹ Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

¹² Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days,

¹³ keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies.

¹⁴ Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are attentive to their cry;

**¹⁶ but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
to blot out their name from the earth.**

¹⁷ The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.

**¹⁸ The LORD is close to the broken-hearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.**

¹⁹ The righteous person may have many troubles,
but the LORD delivers him from them all;

²⁰ he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.

²¹ Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned.

**²² The LORD will rescue his servants;
no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.**

Mark 11;27-end

The authority of Jesus questioned

²⁷ They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him. ²⁸ ‘By what authority are you doing these things?’ they asked. ‘And who gave you authority to do this?’

²⁹ Jesus replied, ‘I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ³⁰ John’s baptism – was it from heaven, or of human origin? Tell me!’

³¹ They discussed it among themselves and said, ‘If we say, “From heaven,” he will ask, “Then why didn’t you believe him?”’ ³² But if we say, “Of

human origin” . . .’ (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.)

³³ So they answered Jesus, ‘We don’t know.’

Jesus said, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.’

Thursday 21st September

Psalm 49

Hear this, all you peoples; listen, all who live in this world,

² **both low and high, rich and poor alike:**

³ My mouth will speak words of wisdom;
the meditation of my heart will give you understanding.

⁴ **I will turn my ear to a proverb;
with the harp I will expound my riddle:**

⁵ Why should I fear when evil days come,
when wicked deceivers surround me –

⁶ **those who trust in their wealth and boast of their great riches?**

⁷ No one can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for them –

⁸ **the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough –**

⁹ so that they should live on for ever and not see decay.

¹⁰ **For all can see that the wise die, that the foolish and the senseless also perish, leaving their wealth to others.**

¹¹ Their tombs will remain their houses for ever, their dwellings for endless generations, though they had named lands after themselves.

¹² **People, despite their wealth, do not endure;
they are like the beasts that perish.**

¹³ This is the fate of those who trust in themselves,
and of their followers, who approve their sayings.

¹⁴ **They are like sheep and are destined to die; death will be their shepherd (but the upright will prevail over them in the morning).
Their forms will decay in the grave, far from their princely mansions.**

¹⁵ But God will redeem me from the realm of the dead;
he will surely take me to himself.

¹⁶ **Do not be overawed when others grow rich,
when the splendour of their houses increases;**

¹⁷ for they will take nothing with them when they die,
their splendour will not descend with them.

¹⁸ **Though while they live they count themselves blessed –
and people praise you when you prosper –**

¹⁹ they will join those who have gone before them,
who will never again see the light of life.

²⁰ **People who have wealth but lack understanding
are like the beasts that perish.**

Mark 12;1-12

The parable of the tenants

¹² Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: ‘A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall round it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. ² At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³ But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵ He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

⁶ ‘He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, “They will respect my son.”

⁷ ‘But the tenants said to one another, “This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.” ⁸ So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

⁹ ‘What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ Haven’t you read this passage of Scripture:

“‘The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

¹¹ the Lord has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes”?’

¹² Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

Friday 22nd September

Psalm 31

In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.

**² Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue;
be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me.**

³ Since you are my rock and my fortress,
for the sake of your name lead and guide me.

⁴ Keep me free from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge.

⁵ Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, LORD, my faithful God.

**⁶ I hate those who cling to worthless idols;
as for me, I trust in the LORD.**

⁷ I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction
and knew the anguish of my soul.

**⁸ You have not given me into the hands of the enemy
but have set my feet in a spacious place.**

⁹ Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with
sorrow, my soul and body with grief.

**¹⁰ My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning;
my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.**

¹¹ Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbours
and an object of dread to my closest friends – those who see me on the
street flee from me.

**¹² I am forgotten as though I were dead;
I have become like broken pottery.**

¹³ For I hear many whispering, ‘Terror on every side!’
They conspire against me and plot to take my life.

¹⁴ But I trust in you, LORD; I say, ‘You are my God.’

¹⁵ My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies,
from those who pursue me.

¹⁶ Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.

¹⁷ Let me not be put to shame, LORD, for I have cried out to you;
but let the wicked be put to shame and be silent in the realm of the dead.

**¹⁸ Let their lying lips be silenced, for with pride and contempt
they speak arrogantly against the righteous.**

¹⁹ How abundant are the good things that you have stored up for those who
fear you, that you bestow in the sight of all, on those who take refuge in you.

**²⁰ In the shelter of your presence you hide them from all human
intrigues; you keep them safe in your dwelling from accusing tongues.**

²¹ Praise be to the LORD, for he showed me the wonders of his love
when I was in a city under siege.

²² In my alarm I said, ‘I am cut off from your sight!’

Yet you heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help.

²³ Love the LORD, all his faithful people! The LORD preserves those who are
true to him, but the proud he pays back in full.

²⁴ Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.

Mark 12;13-17

Paying the poll-tax to Caesar

¹³ Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him
in his words. ¹⁴ They came to him and said, ‘Teacher, we know that you are
a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no
attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with
the truth. Is it right to pay the poll-tax to Caesar or not?’ ¹⁵ Should we pay or
shouldn’t we?’

But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. ‘Why are you trying to trap me?’ he asked.

‘Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.’ ¹⁶ They brought the coin, and he
asked them, ‘Whose image is this? And whose inscription?’

‘Caesar’s,’ they replied.

¹⁷ Then Jesus said to them, ‘Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to
God what is God’s.’

And they were amazed at him.

Saturday 23rd September

Psalm 42

As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.

² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When can I go and meet with God?

³ My tears have been my food day and night,
while people say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’

**⁴ These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to
the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One
with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.**

⁵ Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.

**⁶ My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from
the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon – from Mount Mizar.**

⁷ Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls;
all your waves and breakers have swept over me.

**⁸ By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me –
a prayer to the God of my life.**

⁹ I say to God my Rock, ‘Why have you forgotten me?’

Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?’

**¹⁰ My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me,
saying to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’**

¹¹ Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.

Mark 12:18-27

Marriage at the resurrection

¹⁸ Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ¹⁹ ‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁰ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. ²¹ The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. ²² In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. ²³ At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?’

²⁴ Jesus replied, ‘Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? ²⁵ When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

²⁶ Now about the dead rising – have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”? ²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!’