

Reflection for Trinity 16

Today's Gospel reading might seem surprisingly modern. People are waiting for work to turn up; here they gather at the marketplace and wait and wait. Today their luck changes. First, they encounter a land owner who keeps turning up. Rather than passing through in the morning and gathering his workers for the day, this landowner returns time and again. He seems keen that no-one is left behind.

Then comes the most surprising twist of all. At the end of the day, all of them are paid for a full day's work! Surely this is incredibly unfair for those who have toiled all day in the heat? Surely they deserve their wages more than those who have remained at the marketplace? Perhaps their perseverance is being rewarded.

One suggestion is that Jesus may himself have experienced the fickle nature of this selection process. We might pause to consider those in our own society who are unable to find productive work, or who find the work place inaccessible and inflexible, despite their capabilities.

The landowner ends the day financially poorer and with unrest among his workers but has modelled something which should perhaps challenge us. What would you have done? What is Jesus trying to teach us?

Rev Sarah



NEXT SUNDAY 27.09.26 Trinity 17
10.30am in the Church



OT Ezekiel 18: 1-4, 25-end
NT Philippians 2: 1-13
GOSPEL Matthew 21: 23-32

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St Thomas, Exeter

20th September 2026

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

10.30am in the Church with Holy Baptism

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

306 Light's abode, celestial Salem

27 Amazing Grace

302 Let us, with a gladsome mind

310 Lord, for the years

Tuesday 22nd September

7.30pm House Group at Helen's house

Wednesday 23rd September

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 24th September

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots

10.30-12noon Knit & Natter at Jenny Tuckett's house

Friday 25th September

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting

Saturday 26th September

12.30pm St Thomas Lunch at the Royal Oak.
All welcome.



Collect

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers of your people who call upon you; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Jonah 3: 10 to end of 4

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it. But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the LORD and said, 'O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. An now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.' And the Lord said, 'Is it right for you to be angry?' Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city. The Lord God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, 'It is better for me to die than to live.' But God said to Jonah, 'Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?' And he said, 'Yes, angry enough to die.' Then the Lord said, 'You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labour and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night.

And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?'

Philippians 1: 21-30

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again. Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well— since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Matthew 20: 1-16

Jesus said to his disciples, 'For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out

and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard." 'When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first." When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?" So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'

Post Communion

Almighty God, you have taught us through your Son that love is the fulfilling of the law: grant that we may love you with our whole heart and our neighbours as ourselves; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Notices

This Sunday we welcome back Rev Sarah Cumming who will be preaching and baptizing **Eliza Charlotte Potter**. We pray for Eliza, her family and friends.

Advance Notice:

Harvest Festival Sunday 4th October.