



Daily Reflections & Prayers

7th-13th September 2020

(Based on the Common Worship
Lectionary)

Monday 7th September

Psalm 126

Acts 10:34-48

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

As we conclude the story of Peter and Cornelius let's stop and think who is transformed in this narrative? Who is most changed by this encounter with the Spirit? Is it Cornelius and his household who receive the gift of the Holy Spirit; with all the promise and encouragement that brings; perhaps it is Peter who is most transformed by this challenging encounter with a foreign general with faith; as he learns to meet other people as brothers and sisters in Jesus? Maybe it is the early community who sees its identity shifted by God's Spirit to become genuinely inclusive.

A prayer:

Lord we pray that your spirit will work through our differences and make us one in Jesus name.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for yourself and for those you know and love
- Pray for schools as they continue to welcome children back

Tuesday 8th September

Psalm 133

Acts 11:1-18

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and help me to see you more clearly. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

The short psalm wonderfully expresses the importance of unity for Christians...it tells us in verse 1 that it is a good and pleasing thing. In verse 2 it tells us that it is precious and sweet smelling; the oil that was used to anoint Aaron had a wonderful fragrance which would have filled the room and v3 tells us that unity is life giving. Jesus prayed for it and it's something that only the Holy Spirit does as He is poured upon the church, saturating and drenching the people of God, making them one and bestowing on them a wonderful fragrance. Peter in our Acts reading is learning to recognise just how significant this is, and like him we have to be willing to listen and change when God asks us to

A prayer:

Help us to be open to your many works and to welcome all that you do, even when we don't understand.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Pray for those struggling with navigating differing restrictions

Wednesday 9th September

Psalm 119:161-176

Acts 11:19-30

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

Antioch was a crossroads of culture and trade, a place where people from many countries and cultures, with many languages would have met. The story in Acts has moved on. In response to persecution people have scattered widely, but continue to proclaim the good news of Jesus and the church grows. People are sent from Jerusalem to help support this new community and its growth, to see it rooted deeply. The psalm reflects how important it is to have God's word deeply rooted in our lives to help us grow in faith and face difficulty and even persecution.

A prayer:

May our cry come before you, Lord; give us understanding according to your word.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Pray for those struggling with their mental health
- For those grieving loss and suffering pain

Thursday 10th September

Psalm 146

Acts 12:1-17

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

As the spirit is growing the church in Antioch, the church in Jerusalem is now facing significant persecution. Peter is arrested and the church turns to deeply concerned prayer. Maybe expecting to be executed Peter sleeps and is miraculously released, bemused and following angelic instructions he stumbles to a home where part of the Christian community is praying for his release. Is there anything in the New Testament more human than that? They did not believe it when God answered their prayers. Imagine Peter, pounding away at the door, while the girl inside, having forgotten to let him in, is trying to explain

that God has answered their prayers. They thought she was mad, at first, and then they tried to explain it on other terms. Finally, she persuaded them to come out and they saw Peter still banging away frustratedly. Then they believed it, and were amazed that God had answered their prayers.

A prayer:

Make us faithful in prayer but also make us expectant that you will answer.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Pray for an end to the pandemic, for effective treatments and vaccines.

Friday 11th September

Psalm 142

Acts 12:18-25

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

In this psalm David cried aloud to the Lord, to plead for mercy, to pour out his complaint, and to reveal his trouble he feels trapped and lonely and alone.

We can and should pray to ask God for His help in the middle of whatever struggle we face, whenever we feel trapped and alone even in the middle of a crowd. Maybe we don't fully recognize how the prayer itself serves to bring that calm and assurance of God's help. We are to be confident that prayer changes things, and just as we find comfort in sharing our troubles with a friend, so God invites us to bring everything to him.

A prayer:

Whatever we face this week we bring it to you know, knowing that you hear us, love us and walk with us.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Pray for healthcare staff and scientists seeking to find vaccines, and to manage treating people with Covid19

Saturday 12th September

Psalm 147

Acts13:1-12

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

The psalm reflects a period on Israelite history when people who had been exiled returned to Jerusalem; it is still a tough time for this community but God is described as building up, v. 2 gathering, v. 2, healing, v. 3, binding

up, v. 3 and lifting up, v. 6. SAs the psalm celebrates the return from exile it recognises God's power and strength in arranging their return, in the safety and security of the capital, in his provision for all, in his activity in the wider world. We see God's spirit in action as church leaders in Antioch are called to the next step in the mission to spread the good news of Jesus throughout the world...I'm, sure they were sad to see these leaders go, but they recognised God's call so they sent them willingly. We need to learn to recognise God in action in our lives, and in the lives of our church and community, willing to be called and to be part of sending out trusting that it is God who heals and gathers and builds up

A prayer:

We pray for our leaders that they and we will listen carefully for your call in our lives.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Pray for our churches, their leaders and all they are doing as they reopen

Sunday 13th September

Psalm 114

Matthew 18:21-35

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

Forgiveness is never easy. Surely to forgive someone up to seven times is pretty generous! After all, there has to be a limit, at least so Peter though, only to get an astounding response from Jesus that forgiveness should be offered without limit. The parable he tells to illustrate this throws more light on the call to forgive and on the nature of God's forgiveness. Nothing but mercy born of compassion cancels a debt like the one referred to in the story. The call is to forgive from the heart, not just with words. Peter might have been surprised that there is to be no end to forgiveness, but am also sure he was delighted when he experienced Jesus' forgiveness of his denial

A prayer:

Lord 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those that sin against us'

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Pray for those who have hurt you and who you find difficult to forgive
- Pray for the week ahead for all its challenges and opportunities that we may make Christ known in all we do and say.