

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2018

## Trinity 9

Proper 12 **Green**



### Collect

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; 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**

### 2 Samuel 11:1-15 English Standard Version (ESV)

#### David and Bathsheba

11 <sup>1</sup> In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. <sup>3</sup> And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" <sup>4</sup> So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. <sup>5</sup> And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant." <sup>6</sup> So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. <sup>7</sup> When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing and how the people were doing and how the war was going. <sup>8</sup> Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. <sup>9</sup> But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. <sup>10</sup> When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" <sup>11</sup> Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing." <sup>12</sup> Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. <sup>13</sup> And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house. <sup>14</sup> In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. <sup>15</sup> In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die."

**COMMENT:** Verse 1 makes it sound akin to the opening of the 'fishing season' or the 'hunting season'. There is a practical reason, as the avoidance of war in the wet wintery season is sensible enough. The story of David's double sins of adultery and

calculated murder from the introduction to a new and troubled phase of the monarch's reign. He had already consolidated his power and reinforced it with the nation's most important religious symbol, the Ark of the Covenant. He had become strong enough to commit his army to war with the Ammonites who lived east of the Jordan River. Under the leadership of Joab, the army was in the process of besieging their capital, Rabbah. Perhaps unwisely, David stayed home in Jerusalem. With too much time on his hands, he spied Bathsheba bathing on a rooftop and lusted after her. What follows forms the story line for this Sunday and next Sunday. David's willful adultery followed the familiar pattern of human sinfulness, complete with drawing others into sinful behaviour such as Joab. Uriah was not an Israelite and yet he exhibited the utmost loyalty to Israel, but David's treatment of this loyal man was therefore even more despicable as he arranged the man's death.

## **John 6:1-21 English Standard Version (ESV)**

### **Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand**

**6**<sup>1</sup> After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.<sup>2</sup> And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick.<sup>3</sup> Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples.<sup>4</sup> Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.<sup>5</sup> Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?"<sup>6</sup> He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.<sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii<sup>[a]</sup> worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little."<sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him,<sup>9</sup> "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?"<sup>10</sup> Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number.<sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted.<sup>12</sup> And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost."<sup>13</sup> So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.<sup>14</sup> When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"<sup>15</sup> Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

### **Jesus Walks on Water**

<sup>16</sup> When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea,<sup>17</sup> got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.<sup>18</sup> The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.<sup>19</sup> When they had rowed about three or four miles,<sup>[b]</sup> they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened.<sup>20</sup> But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."<sup>21</sup> Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

**Footnotes:** a. a *denarius* was a day's wage for a labourer. b. Greek *twenty-five or thirty stadia*; a *stadion* was about 607 feet or 185 metres.

**COMMENT:** The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle that appears in all four gospels. John's version of the tradition varies from the others in that this miracle depicts yet another of the distinctive signs by means of which Jesus reveals his status as a person called by God. Mark and the other synoptic gospels tend to use it to deepen the mystery about Jesus' identity. Immediately John reports that Jesus realised that the crowd intended "to make him king," according to their perception of the Messiah. John also is the only writer to note that the loaves were barley – a detail borrowed over from a miracle performed by Elisha; 2 Kings 4:42-44. A further clue to the divinity of Jesus is given in the "I am" statement of Jesus in the passage about walking on the water, but obscured by the English translation of verse which rendered literally is "I am, do not fear" - which is borrowed over from Mark's Gospel, where the passage first appears (Mark 6:50). "I am" is the divine name of God (see Exodus 3:14) which lies behind the name "Yahweh". Caution has to be applied in reading too much into the use of the Greek words 'eg eimi' (I am) as it is an ordinary Greek phrase and was used constantly in Greek conversation. However it is used by John with a clear understanding that it refers to the name of God (John 6:20, 6:35, 6:48, 8:12, 10:9, 10,11, 10:36, 11:25, 14:16, 15:1, 18:6), and this may apply to Mark's use in the passage of the miraculous walking on the water.

### **Psalm 14** *Dixit insipiens* Grail Psalter

**℟** **God made all prisoners of disobedience, that he might show mercy to them all**

<sup>1</sup> The fool has said in his heart:

"There is no God above."

Their deeds are corrupt, depraved;  
not a good man is left. **℟**

<sup>2</sup> From heaven the Lord looks down

on the sons of men

to see if any are wise,

if any seek God. **℟**

<sup>3</sup> All have left the right path,

depraved, every one;

there is not a good man left,

no, not even one. **℟**

<sup>4</sup> Will the evil-doers not understand?

They eat up my people

as though they were eating bread:

they never pray to the Lord. **℟**

<sup>5</sup> See how they tremble with fear

without cause for fear:

for God is with the just.

<sup>6</sup> You may mock the poor man's hope,

but his refuge is the Lord. **℟**

<sup>7</sup> O that Israel's salvation might come from Zion!  
When the Lord delivers his people from bondage,  
then Jacob will be glad and Israel rejoice.

**✠ God made all prisoners of disobedience, that he might show mercy to them all**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.**

**COMMENT:** It may astonish some to realise that this psalm is almost identical to Psalm 53. The explanation for this double appearance is its prior existence in two distinct collections. Scholars regard Psalm 53 as the better preserved. Of note is the use of the name of 'Yahweh' (rendered as 'the LORD') in this version while Psalm 53 uses the name 'Elohim' ('God'), as do most of the psalms in what is known as "the Elohist Psalter," (Psalms 42-83) and will have been part of the northern (Israel) hymnbook, united with the southern (Judah) hymnbook when some of the leaders will have fled to Judah when Israel/Samaria was invaded by the Assyrians in 701 BC. Profound wisdom and a deep sense of social justice lies behind this psalm: Before the LORD all people are sinful. But those who are atheistic receive special condemnation. The end state of unbelievers is to be greatly feared (verse 5a). A time of retribution is at hand. Neglect of a spiritual relationship with the LORD results in the destruction of truly human nature. As Augustine of Hippo said in his Confessions, "Thou has made us for thyself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee."

### **Post Communion**

Holy Father, who gathered us here around the table of your Son to share this meal with the whole household of God: in that new world where you reveal the fullness of your peace, gather people of every race and language to share in the eternal banquet of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **Blessing**

The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, establish, strengthen and settle you in the faith; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**