



## Parish of Finchampstead and California

# THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

## 27 JULY - 1 AUGUST 2020

### INTRODUCTION

The NT readings for Morning Prayer continue their progress through Luke's Gospel; each day's thought is based mainly on the parts of the readings in bold type. This week's readings start part-way through the Last Supper and end in Herod's palace.

### MONDAY - Luke 22:24-30

<sup>24</sup> A dispute also arose among the disciples as to which of them was considered to be greatest. <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. <sup>26</sup> But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. <sup>27</sup> For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? **But I am among you as one who serves.** <sup>28</sup> **You are those who have stood by me in my trials.** <sup>29</sup> And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, <sup>30</sup> so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

### ***Thought for the day***

*Luke has already recorded the disciples arguing about which of them is the greatest (9.46-48). But he wants to emphasise the point by placing this further debate in the context of the Last Supper (in much the same way that John's Gospel approaches this issue, though in a different way, in Jesus' farewell discourses and his washing of the disciples' feet). Here the climax is 'I am among you as one who serves' (v27). He then commends the disciples for standing by him (v28), ironically just before the moment they all desert him, if only for a while. In fact Luke doesn't make their desertion explicit (contrast Mark 14:50). How well have we adopted Jesus' imperative to serve, and have we stood by him?*

### TUESDAY - Luke 22:31-38

<sup>31</sup> "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. <sup>32</sup> **But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.**" <sup>33</sup> But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?" "Nothing," they answered. <sup>36</sup> He said to them, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. <sup>37</sup> It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment." <sup>38</sup> The disciples said, "See, Lord, here are two swords." "That's enough," he replied.

## ***Thought for the day***

*Only Luke reports Jesus' introduction to his prediction that Peter will deny him three times. Satan has already entered Judas (22:3), now he tackles the remaining disciples (v31). In spite of his payers for (Simon) Peter (v32), Jesus knows that Peter will deny him (v34). And yet, in spite of his fallibility, he is to strengthen the others (v33). This ought to be an encouragement to those of us, following Jesus at a distance. We are not required to be infallible; our God-given characteristics aren't negated by mistakes; but we should learn from our failures, and want to do better.*

## **WEDNESDAY - Luke 22:39-46**

<sup>39</sup> Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup> On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." <sup>41</sup> He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> **"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."** <sup>43</sup> An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. <sup>44</sup> And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

<sup>45</sup> When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. <sup>46</sup> "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

## ***Thought for the day***

*'Your will be done, on earth as in heaven' - and so Jesus prays at the time of his agony in the garden. By then he must have been clear that God's will was for the destiny he himself had been predicting for so long. No wonder this heartfelt cry affects him physically, in spite of the presence of a comforting angel. We cannot fully enter into all that Jesus suffered from this point onwards, but most of us will face problems which are hard to hand over to God. Even harder is to say 'Your will be done' when what we're really hoping for is a miracle.*

## **THURSDAY - Luke 22:47-62**

<sup>47</sup> While Jesus was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, <sup>48</sup> but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

<sup>49</sup> When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" <sup>50</sup> And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. <sup>51</sup> But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

<sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs?"

<sup>53</sup> Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns." <sup>54</sup> Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest.

Peter followed at a distance. <sup>55</sup> And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. <sup>56</sup> A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him."

<sup>57</sup> But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. <sup>58</sup> A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied.

<sup>59</sup> About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." <sup>60</sup> Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. <sup>61</sup> The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter

remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." <sup>62</sup> **And he went outside and wept bitterly.**

### ***Thought for the day***

*As we saw on Tuesday, Jesus had not given up on Peter, even knowing how absolute his denial was to be. Peter had followed him to the High Priest's house, determined to show his commitment. But as soon as he was challenged, probably threateningly, Peter lied about Jesus three times, he denied him three times. The cock's crowing brought to mind not just Jesus' words but Jesus himself, Peter's friend and Lord. In that moment all Peter's bluster and self-confidence disappeared - he cried like a child. But just as Jesus fulfilled God's destiny for him (see Wednesday's reading), so Peter would be restored (John 21:15-19), fulfilling God's destiny for him. What is God's destiny for us?*

### **FRIDAY - Luke 22:63-71**

<sup>63</sup> The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. <sup>64</sup> They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" <sup>65</sup> And they said many other insulting things to him.

<sup>66</sup> At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. <sup>67</sup> "If you are the Messiah," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, "**If I tell you, you will not believe me,**" <sup>68</sup> and if I asked you, you would not answer. <sup>69</sup> But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." <sup>70</sup> They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You say that I am." <sup>71</sup> Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips."

### ***Thought for the day***

*Jesus' ministry involved remarkable acts of healing and powerful miracles; his teaching was authoritative. And yet some people, especially those whose status was threatened, wanted more. Perhaps their minds were open once, but now his opponents just wanted to trap him, ideally with evidence that would condemn him in Roman eyes. Jesus realises what they are trying to do and avoids direct answers, as he has done before. Not that it matters much since, as we know, the temple hierarchy will get what they want, one way or another. Today is a good day to consider who we believe Jesus to be, and how we might explain his importance to someone who hasn't yet welcomed him into their heart.*

### **SATURDAY - Luke 23:1-12**

<sup>1</sup> Then the whole assembly rose and led Jesus off to Pilate. <sup>2</sup> And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king." <sup>3</sup> So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied.

<sup>4</sup> Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." <sup>5</sup> But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here." <sup>6</sup> On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. <sup>7</sup> When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

<sup>8</sup> **When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort.** <sup>9</sup> **He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer.** <sup>10</sup> The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. <sup>11</sup> Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him.

Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. <sup>12</sup> That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

### ***Thought for the day***

*The story turns almost farcical now. Herod, whose involvement in the quasi-judicial process was unknown to the other Gospel writers, is pleased to see Jesus, because he hopes he will do some magic. In this context, Jesus' refusal even to enter into debate with him must have been infuriating, so he and his soldiers resort to bully-boy tactics (v11). There are a thousand and one ways in which Christianity can be trivialised, and often is. Sometimes an engaged response is called for. At others, as Jesus showed, the best response is silence.*

JRE / 7.7.20