

A few words on our readings

Isaiah 56: 1, 6-8. Isaiah speaks God's word to those who have returned from Babylon to settle once more in Jerusalem. The people are reminded to respect God's covenant, which was for the people of Israel, but are equally warned that God's mercy extends to those outside the covenant. The outsider is invited to respect the covenant with the promise that they will be included if they obey God's commandments. In today's gospel we hear Jesus going out of his way to include the outsider because of her faith and confidence in him. We must be equally open to all those we encounter.

Romans 11: 1-2, 29-32. Paul tries to show that in God's plan for salvation there is room for both Christians and those who cling to the Covenant that God had made with the people of Israel. God's salvation is for all.

Matthew 15: 10-20, 21-28. There are two clear parts to today's gospel reading. The first which can be omitted is an attack on the Pharisees who had just challenged Jesus about observing ritual washing. Jesus wants to show that it is not through such practices that we become more God-like but through what we say and do. The disciples are shocked that Jesus should challenge the pharisees so publically when they were defending the rules of their ancestors. Yet Jesus finds that they are not worthy to lead others. Peter has difficulty in understanding Jesus' teaching.

All this is in sharp contrast to the second part of our Gospel reading. The Canaanite woman recognises Jesus as the Son of David. Her simple faith in him overcomes his reticence in helping her, a non-Jew. Her bemoans the lack of faith shown by God's chosen people, concerned only it would seem about petty rules, and the lack of understanding by the disciples. The woman claims God's mercy for those who don't belong to the establishment but who have faith. Jesus heals her daughter and gives her value as a person even though she realises her position as a non-Jew, often referred to at that time as a dog, hence the discussion about dogs under the table. The message for us is clearly to care for everyone, to be as inclusive as we can and to come to God with simple faith.

Opportunities for worship, prayers and other resources 16.08.2020

You can watch a **video sermon** on Sunday's Gospel or read the script on <https://www.sheffield.anglican.org/video-sermons>

Reflection & Compline on Thursday at 7.30 pm led by the Revd. Erika Kirk on the Southwell Minster website www.southwellminster.org

Radio & TV

Sunday Worship on Radio 4 at 8-10 am Songs of Praise BBC 1 at 1-15 pm.
Choral Evensong Wednesday at 3-30pm on BBC Radio 3 & on Sundays at 3.00pm
The Daily Service (15 minutes on weekdays) at 9h45 on BBC Radio 4 long wave