

Sunday 27th September 2026 – Trinity 17

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, you call us to fullness of life, deliver us from unbelief and banish our anxieties with the liberating life of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Amen.

Hymn

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
He whose word cannot be broken
Formed thee for his own abode.
On the Rock of ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose:
With salvation's walls surrounded,
Thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

See, the streams of living waters,
Springing from eternal love,
Well supply thy sons and daughters,
And all fear of want remove,
Who can faint while such a river
Ever flows their thirst to assuage;
Grace which, like the Lord, the giver,
Never fails from age to age?

Round each habitation hovering,
See the cloud and fire appear
For a glory and a covering,
Showing that the Lord is near.
Thus they march, the pillar leading,
Light by night and shade by day;
Daily on the manna feeding
Which he gives them when they pray.

Saviour, if of Zion's city
I through grace a member am,
Let the world deride and pity
I will glory in thy name.
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasure,
None by Zion's children know.

The Collect

Gracious God, you call us to fullness of life: deliver us from unbelief and banish our anxieties with the liberating love of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen.

Reading NT Reading Matthew 21:23-32 The Authority of Jesus Questioned.

Jesus entered the temple courts, and while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?"

Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism – where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?"

They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven', he will ask, 'then why didn't you believe him? But if we say, 'from men' – we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet."

So they answered Jesus, "We don't know". Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things".

Reflection

This passage shows Jesus outwitting the chief priests and elders in the Temple by exposing their hypocrisy and fear of man when they question His authority.

Key themes of the passage are:

The **Challenge of Power**: the religious leaders demand to know Jesus' authority because His actions – like clearing the temple and teaching openly – threaten their institutional control.

The **Trap Sprung**: Jesus answers their hostile question with a question about John the Baptist's baptism, forcing them to weigh divine truth against public opinion.

The **Cowardly Retreat**: Trapped by their own political calculations, the leaders Choose self-preservation and reply "We do not know", forfeiting their moral authority.

Points for reflection:

Truth versus Comfort: The chief priests were not seekers of truth; they were protectors of their status. Ask yourself if you ever avoid God's truth because it demands an uncomfortable change in your life.

The Fear of Man: The leaders feared the crowd more than God. Consider where peer pressure or public opinion compromises your own stand for what is right.

Recognizing Authority: Jesus' authority is rooted in His identity as God – with – us.

Hymn

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder

Consider all the works thy hand hath made,

I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,

Thy power throughout the universe displayed;

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,

How great thou art, how great thou art!

Then sings my soul; my Saviour God, to thee,

How great thou art, how great thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze,
 *Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
 How great thou art, how great thou art!*
 *The sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
 How great thou art, how great thou art!*

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
Sent him to die – I scarce can take it in:
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin;
 Then sings my soul....

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home – what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim, my God, how great thou art!
 Then sings my soul....

Closing prayers

Lord, we pray that your grace may always precede and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen.