**Sunday 31st August, Trinity 11**

**Opening Sentence**

With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them. (Acts 4, 33)

**The Collect and Readings**

**The Collect**

Almighty God, who called your church to witness that you were in Christ of your love, that all who hear it may be reconciled to you; through him who died for us and rose again and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Readings**

**Jeremiah 2, v. 4 – 13**

Listen to the LORD's message, you descendants of Jacob, you tribes of Israel. The LORD says: “What accusation did your ancestors bring against me? What made them turn away from me? They worshipped worthless idols and became worthless themselves. They did not care about me, even though I rescued them from Egypt and led them through the wilderness: a land of deserts and sand dunes, a dry and dangerous land where no one lives and no one will even travel. I brought them into a fertile land, to enjoy its harvests and its other good things. But instead they ruined my land; they defiled the country I had given them. The priests did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD?’ My own priests did not know me. The rulers rebelled against me; the prophets spoke in the name of Baal and worshipped useless idols.

“And so I, the LORD, will state my case against my people again. I will bring charges against their descendants. Go west to the island of Cyprus, and send someone eastwards to the land of Kedar. You will see that nothing like this has ever happened before. No other nation has ever changed its gods, even though they were not real. But my people have exchanged me, the God who has brought them honour, for gods that can do nothing for them. 12And so I command the sky to shake with horror, to be amazed and astonished, for my people have committed two sins: they have turned away from me, the spring of fresh water, and they have dug cisterns, cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all.

**Hebrews 13, v. 1 – 8, 15 – 26**

Keep on loving one another as Christian brothers and sisters. Remember to welcome strangers in your homes. There were some who did that and welcomed angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them. Remember those who are suffering, as though you were suffering as they are.

Marriage is to be honoured by all, and husbands and wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery.

Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, “I will never leave you; I will never abandon you.” Let us be bold, then, and say:

“The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?”

Remember your former leaders, who spoke God's message to you. Think back on how they lived and died, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

Let us, then, always offer praise to God as our sacrifice through Jesus, which is the offering presented by lips that confess him as Lord. Do not forget to do good and to help one another, because these are the sacrifices that please God.

Obey your leaders and follow their orders. They watch over your souls without resting, since they must give God an account of their service. If you obey them, they will do their work gladly; if not, they will do it with sadness, and that would be of no help to you.

Keep on praying for us. We are sure we have a clear conscience, because we want to do the right thing at all times. And I beg you even more earnestly to pray that God will send me back to you soon.

God has raised from death our Lord Jesus, who is the Great Shepherd of the sheep as the result of his blood, by which the eternal covenant is sealed. May the God of peace provide you with every good thing you need in order to do his will, and may he, through Jesus Christ, do in us what pleases him. And to Christ be the glory for ever and ever! Amen.

I beg you, my brothers and sisters, to listen patiently to this message of encouragement; for this letter I have written to you is not very long. I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been let out of prison. If he comes soon enough, I will have him with me when I see you.

Give our greetings to all your leaders and to all God's people. The brothers and sisters from Italy send you their greetings.

May God's grace be with you all.

**Luke 14, v. 1, 7 – 14**

One Sabbath Jesus went to eat a meal at the home of one of the leading Pharisees; and people were watching Jesus closely.

Jesus noticed how some of the guests were choosing the best places, so he told this parable to all of them: “When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place. It could happen that someone more important than you has been invited, and your host, who invited both of you, would have to come and say to you, ‘Let him have this place.’ Then you would be embarrassed and have to sit in the lowest place. Instead, when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that your host will come to you and say, ‘Come on up, my friend, to a better place.’ This will bring you honour in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who make themselves great will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be made great.”

Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your rich neighbours — for they will invite you back, and in this way you will be paid for what you did. When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind; and you will be blessed, because they are not able to pay you back. God will repay you on the day the good people rise from death.”

