

Reflection by Diana Johnson

Common Worship Lectionary: Romans 7: 15-25a; Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-end

St Mary and St Michael, Trumpington

5th July 2020 (Trinity 4)

8am BCP Communion Service



Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable to you, O

Lord, our rock and our Redeemer. (Ps 19.14 alt.)

O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal: Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen.

In this Collect which I have left on the slide for you to read again, we recognize our total dependence upon the protection, strength, holiness, mercy, providence and guidance of God our heavenly Father for the true living of the Christian life in this evil age and sinful world, and in preparation for the world to come.

We ask not only for the increase of God's mercy towards us, but that it may also be multiplied. It is as though we have in mind the increase in the widow's oil in the ministry of Elijah (1 Kings 17:10-17) and the multiplication of the bread and fishes by our Lord (John 6:5-15). We are as those who have experienced God's mercy **in part** yet who know that they need it urgently **in greater part** - and need it to be not only increased but also multiplied!

What a daring thing to ask!

Genesis explains the way that the world we live in is made by God but is poisoned by humans rebelling against God. Christians call that Sin. Thus in our lives in the world we experience both blessings and temptations, encouragements and tribulation. We rise and we fall; we feel good and we feel bad. It is possible to pass through this world and be wholly absorbed by it - as we clearly see happening to many at the present time in the West. It is possible virtually to forget God as Creator, Judge and Redeemer, and live in this world as though we are responsible only to ourselves and that we are merely creatures of space and time who exercise our 'rights' in full.

But we are created to enjoy and glorify God for ever; we are called to serve him in this world and the next and to enter into the next through the resurrection of the dead and the redemption of the body. If we see ourselves as **made for eternity** and not merely for space and time, then we shall pass through this world as those whose eyes are set upon Christ Jesus, the Lord, and in obedience to his command and call. The intensity of the Christian hope is well stated by St Paul when he writes of longing for the redemption of the body.



We certainly need God's mercy to surround and fill us, his rule over us and his guidance known in our souls, if we are to negotiate our way through this world in such a way as always to remain citizens of heaven and disciples of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the new Jerusalem. In this world we are to live as those who reflect in their lives the character and virtue of the life that is to come.

So our prayer today, our Collect, ends with the intense verb, 'Grant'. Grant all this, we ask of our heavenly Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, his Son and our Lord.

Amen.

Word count: 490 Time: 3 minutes
Approx. 125 words min⁻¹