

## Evening Prayer Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021



Jacopo Vignali *Jael & Sisera* (1592-1664)

*The God of peace and love remain with us always*

### PSALM 50

THE Lord, even the most mighty God, hath spoken : and called the world, from the rising up of the sun unto the going down thereof.

2. Out of Sion hath God appeared : in perfect beauty.

3. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence : there shall go before him a consuming fire, and a mighty tempest shall be stirred up round about him.

4. He shall call the heaven from above : and the earth, that he may judge his people.

5. Gather my saints together unto me : those that have made a covenant with me with sacrifice.

6. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness : for God is Judge himself.

7. Hear, O my people, and I will speak : I myself will testify against thee, O Israel; for I am God, even thy God.

8. I will not reprove thee because of thy sacrifices, or for thy burnt-offerings : because they were not alway before me.

9. I will take no bullock out of thine house : nor he-goat out of thy folds.

10. For all the beasts of the forest are mine : and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills.

11. I know all the fowls upon the mountains : and the wild beasts of the field are in my sight.

12. If I be hungry, I will not tell thee : for the whole world is mine, and all that is therein.

13. Thinkest thou that I will eat bulls' flesh : and drink the blood of goats?

14. Offer unto God thanksgiving : and pay thy vows unto the most Highest.

15. And call upon me in the time of trouble : so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise me.

16. But unto the ungodly said God : Why dost thou preach my laws, and takest my covenant in thy mouth;

17. Whereas thou hatest to be reformed : and has cast my words behind thee?

18. When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst unto him : and hast been partaker with the adulterers.

19. Thou hast let thy mouth speak wickedness : and with thy tongue thou hast set forth deceit.

20. Thou satest, and spakest against thy brother : yea, and hast slandered thine own mother's son.

21. These things hast thou done, and I held my tongue, and thou thoughtest wickedly, that I am even such a one as thyself : but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things that thou hast done.

22. O consider this, ye that forget God : lest I pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you.

23. Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me : and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

The readings can be found online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com): recommended translations are NRSV, RSV, or KJV.

## FIRST LESSON

Judges 4.1-23

## SECOND LESSON

Luke 13.10-21

### 1 THE COLLECT FOR TRINITY 2

O LORD, who never failest to help and govern them who thou dost bring up in thy stedfast fear and love; Keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

### 2 THE SECOND COLLECT AT EVENING PRAYER.

O GOD, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee, we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

### 3 THE THIRD COLLECT for aid against all perils.

LIGHTEN our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

## PRAYERS

On this day the Church of England commemorates Evelyn Underhill, spiritual writer. Instead of prayers for today, I have provided here some of her guidance on the art of prayer; with an invitation to read it and apply it to the circumstances of your own life, and to the wisdom of today's readings.

### 1. Stretching Out

Prayer is that part of our conscious life which is deliberately oriented towards spiritual reality. God is that spiritual reality. Prayer entails a going up or out from our ordinary circle of earthly interests. Prayer stretches out our consciousness to "Eternal truth, true love, and beloved eternity" (Augustine).

### 2. This Double Situation

We are at once citizens of Eternity and of Time. Our consciousness moves perpetually — or should move if it is healthy — between God and our neighbour. The wholeness, sanity, and balance of our existence depend on the steady alternating beat of our outward adoration, and our homeward-turning swing of charity.

### 3. Three Faculties

There are three capacities or faculties which we have under consideration — the thinking faculty, the feeling faculty, and the willing or acting faculty. These practically cover all the ways in which the self can react to other selves and other things.

### 4. Work and Rest

Prayer should take up all the powers of our mental, emotional, and volitional life. Prayers should be the highest exercise of these powers; for here they are directed to the only adequate object of thought, of love, and of desire. It should, as it were, represent the fullest flowering of our consciousness. For here we attain that communion with Reality for which we were made.

### 5. The Transition from Inaction to Action

Now, when we do anything consciously, the transition from inaction to action unfolds itself in a certain order. First, we form a concept of what we shall do. Second, we feel that we want to do it, or must do it. Third, we determine that we will do it. First we think, then we feel, then we will. This generalization must not be pressed too hard; but it gives us a starting-point to trace out the way in which the three main powers of the self act in prayer.

#### 6. An Active and Disciplined Intelligence

Prayer should begin with an intellectual act, thinking of what we are going to do: meditation. This comes before oration (spoken prayer). Meditation is the art of thinking methodically about spiritual things. There are some who believe that when we turn to God we ought to leave our brains behind us. They gain nothing by anticipating this moment when reason is left behind; they will not attain the depths of prayer by the mere annihilation of their intelligence. In saying this I am not advocating a religious intellectualism. Humility and love are essential for successful prayer. But surely it is a mistake to suppose that these qualities cannot exist side by side with an active and disciplined intelligence.

#### 7. Preparing the Consciousness

Prayer, then, begins by thinking of God to the exclusion of other objects of thought, by deliberately surrendering the mind to spiritual things, by preparing the consciousness for the inflow of new life. But having thought of God, the self, if it stops there, is no more in touch with God than it was before. We may think as long as we like, but thought unhelped by feeling ever remains apart from its object.

#### 8. The Industrious Will and the Passionate Heart

Where the office of thought ends, there the office of will and feeling begins. Desire and intention are the most dynamic of our faculties. They are the true explorers of the Infinite, the instruments of our ascents to God. Reason comes to the foot of the mountain; the industrious will, urged by the passionate heart, climbs the slope.

#### 9. The Art of Prayer

If a high level of feeling or understanding often seems to fail us, the reigning will remains. Even when our heart is cold and our mind is dim, prayer is still possible to us. The determined fixing of our will upon God, pressing toward him steadily and without deflection; this is the very art of prayer.

Excerpted from *The Essentials of Mysticism* by Evelyn Underhill, 1920.

**THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all evermore. Amen.**