



## **Pentecost 18 - Sunday October 12th, 2025**

### **The Fig Tree Worship Resource**

#### **Call to worship & Lighting the Candle**

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;  
sing the glory of his name;  
give to him glorious praise.

**Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!  
Because of your great power, your enemies  
cringe before you.**

**All the earth worships you;  
they sing praises to you,  
sing praises to your name."**

Come and see what God has done:  
he is awesome in his deeds among mortals.  
He turned the sea into dry land;  
they passed through the river on foot.  
**There we rejoiced in him,  
who rules by his might forever,  
whose eyes keep watch on the nations—  
let the rebellious not exalt themselves.**

Bless our God, O peoples;  
let the sound of his praise be heard,  
who has kept us among the living  
and has not let our feet slip.  
**For you, O God, have tested us;  
you have tried us as silver is tried.  
You brought us into the net;  
you laid burdens on our backs;  
you let people ride over our heads;  
we went through fire and through water;  
yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.**

*Light the candle - Christ is with us.*

#### **Acknowledging**



**Uniting Aboriginal and Islander  
Christian Congress**

The Ancient of Days breathed life into this land  
and her peoples. From time beyond our  
reckoning the *(please name the people on whose  
land you gather)* People, the Traditional  
Custodians, have blessed this place through their  
law and customs, their care and life. We pay

respects to their Elders and leaders past and  
present, and pray for the future of their  
communities. May we walk gently and  
respectfully on this Land.

#### **Singing - Joyful, joyful, we adore you** **TiS 152**

OR: Jesus put this song into our hearts TiS 670  
OR: The king of glory comes TiS 279



#### **Prayer**

Gracious God, the author of all of life's gifts, we  
give thanks for the blessings that we receive this  
day and all days. Let us remember the gifts of  
family, friends and community and the  
opportunity to worship you in peace. We thank  
you that you constantly lead us to find your will  
for the world. That you offer us the opportunities  
and encounters where we can show your love  
and reconciliation.

Forgive us if we have acted as if these gifts are  
commonplace and to be expected. As if the  
opportunities and resources we have are our due.  
Forgive us when we forget to share the  
abundance you have bestowed on us.

Show us again that we have been blessed with  
your special purposes for us. That we can always  
be a blessing to others because of the love and  
generosity that you have shown to us.

As we listen for your calling to us today, help us to  
hear and understand how much our love and  
caring are urgently needed around the world.  
Remind us again that we are still learning to share  
your love, but we should never be afraid to share  
our gratitude and thanks. So may our worship  
ready us for courageous living in the power of  
your spirit.

**Amen**



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Hear then again, the constant words of grace to us. Your faith has made you whole – in Christ our sins are forgiven.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### **Optional Activity**

*Have a gratitude jar in the middle of your worship space. Get people to write down three things they are grateful for and then bring those thanks to the gratitude jar as an offering for the day. The combined thoughts of gratitude can then be acknowledged and blessed as part of the service.*

#### **Passing the peace**

May the Peace of God dwell with you:  
**and also with you.**

#### **Listening**

Read: Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7 &  
Luke 17:11-19

For these words of faith  
and for Jesus the Word

**Thanks be to God.**

#### **Reflecting - Rev. Arnie Wierenga**

It's quite difficult to see beyond biases and prejudices. This is at play in our gospel story, as Jesus tells of ten lepers finding cleansing, with only one gratefully returning.

My background is Dutch although I was born in Australia. Even as I feel fully Australian, Dutch sensibilities have shaped me. We were with my sister some years ago when I thanked her for something. Quick as a flash she replied in Dutch, 'no thanks needed'. It was a humorous moment that highlights a Dutch Protestant cultural urge not to draw attention to your good deeds, lest you somehow be boastful about them. Part of the humour and irony is that by even saying such a thing, you draw attention to whatever you were being thanked for.

So, Jesus cleanses ten men with a skin disease.

For what it's worth, what is called leprosy is not the Hansen's disease we know today. It was a term to describe any kind of skin ailment that was considered infectious. Stay away lest you be blighted and alienated from community. Keep your distance and treat lepers like lepers.

These ten unclean men are respectful at least. As classified lepers they know they cannot demand Jesus touch them to be cleansed. They behave according to cultural expectations, or the Levite law. They call out to him, and Jesus responds with the same sensibility. Go to the priests, they will sort it out for you.

The priests had the unenviable task of checking out people who claimed to be clean and verifying if this was so. But what Jesus suggests is also quite odd. It presupposes they are clean. "Go and show yourselves to the priests".

And they went.

And they were made clean.

There is no particular fanfare. Just a sending, a responding, and a cleansing. So, ten are declared clean by the priests. But only one comes back to say thanks.

What's going on here? Are nine ungrateful? Do nine have a dour Dutch background or equivalent 'nothing to see here' sensibility? Are we meant to be struck by the contrast of one compared to the nine?

Ten are made clean. One comes back to say thank you to Jesus. And Jesus says to the one, 'your faith has made you well.'

It's telling that the one was a Samaritan. You may remember the story of the *Good Samaritan* as being the one who showed love while others ignored the plight of one beaten up by the roadside. Samaritans were mistrusted and often despised by Jews. Perhaps Palestinians might fall into that category today. So here is a Samaritan



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coming back to Jesus to offer gratitude where no one else has.

Is this story a prod to us in our prejudices and stereotypes? Jews could not see the good in Samaritans. They would be provoked by this story. The gospel subverts a racist stereotype for the sake of the kingdom. The one who shows us the way is the one we are in danger of dismissing or despising. The tenth leper, the Samaritan, has been made whole, that is, is the image of full salvation (not just cleansing).

I wonder what it is that blinds us to the gift of full salvation? What prejudices get in the way of what Christ does within and without us?

A friend recently returned home from holiday in the USA. She was astonished at the sight of many homeless people who were physically present but not in mind or spirit. Drugs and alcohol are often used to numb whatever pain has caused folk to live in ways such as this. She was also perplexed as to underlying issues. We offered a book we had just read of an Australian man who had been similarly homeless and used drugs to quell

difficult childhood memories<sup>[1]</sup>. It is easy to make assumptions about folk whose lives are so different to our own, but unless we take care to understand rather than dismiss, we may dismiss the value in Samaritan and homeless person alike (or whoever we imagine falling short of the glory of God).

The Samaritan leper came back to say, 'thank you!' to Jesus. But from Jesus' perspective, the man returned to give glory to God. Thanking Jesus is the equivalent of giving glory to God. And in this, we find the way to become whole despite all that might otherwise become a blocker to salvation for us or for others.

So, despite my cultural sensibilities, I want to be among those who are truly thankful. Thank you, Jesus – for helping us see good in Jews, Samaritans, Palestinians, those homeless and all who are created in God's image. Thank you, Jesus

- for showing us the path beyond cleansing to being fully whole.

So, the *thank you* is clearly necessary after all - thanks be to God!

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[1] 'Out of the forest', by Gregory P. Smith

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### ***Singing - Community of Christ TiS 473***

OR: When I needed a neighbour TiS 629

OR: O Christ the healer we have come TiS 638

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### ***Offering***

**We bring these gifts of ourselves to you, gracious God. Help us to share our resources with compassion and imagination, so that we live with the integrity of our faith. Amen**

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### ***Notices***

**October 16** is *World Food Day*.

**October 17** is International Day for the *Eradication of Poverty*.

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### ***Prayers for World & Community***

Our life is rich with your gifts, O God. Gifts that gladden our hearts and with you give us opportunities beyond our understanding. At this time, we call to mind the gifts of the whole of creation for the whole of your people.

For those who are lost and alone –  
we pray the gift of companionship.  
*(Silence)*

For those who are frightened and in pain –  
we pray the gift of ease.  
*(Silence)*

For those who are hungry and homeless –  
we pray the gift of sustenance and shelter.  
*(Silence)*



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For those who are angry and in despair –  
we pray the gift of gentle resolution.

*(Silence)*

For those who are hopeless –  
we pray the gift of a glimmer of fulfillment.

*(Silence)*

For those who long for peace,  
justice and reconciliation –  
we pray the gift of courage and action.

*(Silence)*

In your presence together Lord, we bring the  
deepest prayers of our hearts. May we be part of  
your vision for a world drawn back into your  
loving embrace.

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:

#### ***The Lord's Prayer***

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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.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory  
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

#### ***Singing - Jesus Christ is waiting TiS 665***

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OR: Father Lord of All Creation (tune: Abbot's Leigh) TiS 631  
OR: Sent forth by God's blessing TiS 531

#### ***Blessing***

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Go out in the world today – rested and refreshed  
that you might not let your feet slip or your voice  
falter, but show in word and deed what the Lord  
has done for you.

In the name of the Creator, the Redeemer and  
Sustainer - Amen.

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