

How do we understand power? How do we use power effectively and creatively? In what ways does the view of power an authority that God's Reign offers lead us into true allegiance to God and into lives in which our small contributions make a difference (as we've explored over the last two weeks)? These are some of the questions that the Lectionary raises this week, and, in our world of power struggles, they are important questions to answer.

May we learn to embrace the weak, serving and generous power of Christ through our liturgy this week.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

1 Samuel 17 : [1a, 4-11, 19-23], 32-49

There are two different accounts in the Bible about how David came to be in the court of King Saul, whom he eventually succeeded. This is one of them - the legendary defeat of the Philistine Goliath.

The Psalm - Psalm 9: 9-20

A song of faith in God's care for the poor and weak, and a plea for God to bring down the wicked, reveal to the nations that they are merely human, and rescue the psalmist from his enemies so that he can praise God again.

2 Corinthians 6 : 1-13

This letter reaches a climax, as Paul appeals to the Christians at Corinth to understand how kind and gentle he is for Christ's sake, despite the strong rebuke he has had to give them.

Mark 4 : 35-41

Mark has shown Jesus's power to heal the sick in mind and body. Now he reveals to us the divine authority which was enough to still the raging wind and turbulent sea.

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

O Lord,
we beseech thee mercifully to hear us;
and grant that we, to whom thou hast given
an hearty desire to pray,
may by thy mighty aid be defended and comforted
in all dangers and adversities;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect Two

Almighty God,
you have broken the tyranny of sin
and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts
whereby we call you Father:
Give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,

that we and all creation may be brought
to the glorious liberty of the children of God;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

God of all creation, from sowing to harvest, we stand in awe of the miracle of life in your kingdom, which calls us to celebrate your presence among us. We hail the mystery of your coming, your call by the Spirit, and the consummation of all things. And we say, "Prosper your reign and rule among us," and respond with one voice, "Amen."

That the Christ's church catholic may grow in every realm, from a time of hiddenness and insignificance to the day of blossoming and fruitfulness, we pray. Prosper your reign and rule among us. **Amen.**

That you would drive out the shadows of doubt that paralyze our growth in Christ as a congregation, we pray. Prosper your reign and rule among us. **Amen.**

That those being instructed in the Word of God and the Christian life may not be discouraged or turned away by difficulties, we pray. Prosper your reign and rule among us. **Amen.**

That all who pursue peace and justice in our community may not grow faint of heart, we pray. Prosper your reign and rule among us. **Amen.**

That those who practice the healing arts in our hospitals, clinics, private offices or homes, may be strengthened in mind and body, we pray. Prosper your reign and rule among us. **Amen.**

That those who grieve may not be isolated despair and loneliness, but may be daily undergirded by our prayerful support, we pray. Prosper your reign and rule among us. **Amen.**

Take from us the selfishness that thinks only of ourselves and forgets the distress of those nearby. Let your Spirit dwell in us fully and awaken our love, dear God. Prosper your reign and rule among us. **Amen.**

O God, grant us the wisdom to observe your workings among us and cherish the same with humility and praise. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

Presider or deacon

To God who commands even the wind and the sea let us offer prayers for all creation.

Deacon or other leader

For this holy gathering and for the people of God in every place.

Lord, have mercy.

For all nations, peoples, tribes, clans, and families.

Lord, have mercy.

For mercy, justice, and peace throughout the world.

Lord, have mercy.

For this city and every place.

Lord, have mercy.

For all those in every danger and calamity: those afflicted and suffering hardship, those beaten and imprisoned, those sleepless and hungry.

Lord, have mercy.

For the dying and the dead, and all who mourn.

Lord, have mercy.

For ourselves, our families and companions, and those we love.

Lord, have mercy.

Lifting our voices with all creation, with Saint (Parish name) and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

Presider

God of our salvation, hear the prayers we offer this day for all who are tossed in the storms of life, and open wide our hearts to accept your grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

POST COMMUNION

O God,
whose beauty is beyond our imagining
and whose power we cannot comprehend:
Give us a glimpse of your glory on earth
but shield us from knowing more than we can bear
until we may look upon you without fear;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

PRAYERS

Your hand is upon your people, O God,
to guide and protect them through the ages.
Keep in your service
those you have called and anointed,
that the powers of this world may not overwhelm us,
but that, secure in your love,
we may carry out your will
in the face of all adversity. Amen.

O God our ruler and shepherd,

www.churchnewsireland.org

you anointed Jesus
as the king and servant of your people.
Make us attentive to your word,
that we may accept your reign over us
and serve you alone. Amen.

Friends in Christ,
God invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers
as dear to us as our own needs.
Loving our neighbors as ourselves,
we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions
on behalf of the church and the world.
Hear our prayers, God of power,
and through the ministry of your Son
free us from the grip of the tomb,
that we may desire you as the fullness of life
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

As you heard the prayer of Isaac and Rebekah, O God,
and guided them in the way of your love,
so listen now to those who call upon you.
Move us to praise your gracious will,
for in Christ Jesus you have saved us from the deeds of death
and opened for us the hidden ways of your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God, friend of those in need,
your Son Jesus has untied our burdens
and healed our spirits.
We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened,
those seeking healing,
those in need within the church and the world.
Hear our prayers
that we may love you with our whole being
and willingly share the concerns of our neighbors. Amen.

Creator God,
you call us to love and serve you
with body, mind, and spirit
through loving your creation
and our sisters and brothers.
Open our hearts in compassion
and receive these petitions
on behalf of the needs of the church and the world.
Holy One,
hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards
of the fragile bounty of this earth
so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven. Amen.

We praise your abiding guidance, O God,
for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah,

to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.
We offer these prayers of love
on behalf of ourselves and our neighbors,
on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures.
Loving God,
open our ears to hear your word
and draw us closer to you,
that the whole world may be one with you
as you are one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of mercy and healing,
you who hear the cries of those in need,
receive these petitions of your people
that all who are troubled
may know peace, comfort, and courage.

Life-giving God,
heal our lives,
that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds
and offer you thanks from generation to generation
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of salvation,
who sent your Son to seek out and save what is lost,
hear our prayers
on behalf of those who are lost in our day,
receiving these petitions and thanksgivings
with your unending compassion.
Redeeming Sustainer,
visit your people
and pour out your strength and courage upon us,
that we may hurry to make you welcome
not only in our concern for others,
but by serving them
generously and faithfully in your name. Amen.

God our protector,
you stood by David in the time of trial.
Stand with us through all life's storms,
giving us courage to risk danger
to protect those who are oppressed and poor,
that they may know you as their stronghold and hope. Amen.

Keeper of our lives,
you know the hardness and gentleness of human hearts.
You call your people to faithful living.
Through the storms of life
that bring suffering and fear, joy and laughter,
teach us to turn to you for all we need,
so that we may come to know your presence
even in the midst of the trials that surround us. Amen.

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

The question of authority speaks through all of the readings this week, including both the Gospel and its related readings and the continuous Old Testament passage. The journey of David continues in the continuous Old Testament narrative. After last weeks' account of his anointing, this week we read of how the young shepherd calls on God's authority to defeat the giant, Goliath, and then is given authority over Saul's army. An interesting feature of this passage is the difference between Saul, whose authority is threatened by this new leader, and Saul's son Jonathan, who would be expected to be threatened by a possible usurper of his throne, but who loves David selflessly and devotedly. In the Gospel, the question of authority is raised through the story of Jesus calming the storm. Here Jesus is shown to have access to the authority and power of God not just over people, sickness and evil spirits, but over the natural world as well. Both of these passages reflect on authority as power or strength or "dominance over". Paul's letter to the Corinthians, however, gives a different perspective on authority. It is in the weakness and suffering of Paul and the other apostles, and their commitment to the Gospel in spite of their hardships, that Paul's authority is revealed, and it is on the basis of this that Paul calls on the Christians to accept his ministry and his message. The picture of authority is further rounded out by the other readings for this week. In Job, which relates to the Gospel, God's authority over Creation is revealed, both in the fact that God has laid the earth's foundations, and in the way God sets the boundaries for the sea (which Jesus "imposed" through his command). In the Psalms God's authority is proclaimed over the nations (Psalm 9) as the psalmist pleads with God to bring justice and show the nations that they are merely human, and, again, over the sea (Psalm 107) as God both raises up and calms the storm. In Psalm 133 God's authority is not specifically mentioned, but the blessing of life forever more that God gives to those who live in unity is a sign both of God's authority over our lives, and of the authority we enjoy together as God's people. This week, then, we are invited to continue the journey from committing our allegiance to God's Reign alone (two weeks ago) to recognising the impact that small contributions can have (last week), to living as those who are under God's authority while also, together as God's people, exercising authority in God's name as we bring life and justice to others.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: In many developing countries the abuse of power, the corruption in government and the violence between political and tribal factions reflects our struggle to use power for the good of all, and the damage that a hunger for power and dominance can cause. A similar reality is reflected in the often vitriolic and extremely divisive rhetoric that accompanies electioneering in developed nations, and especially the United States. On a global scale, the injustices from which the poor and weak suffer at the hands of the powerful and wealthy – including unfair trade practices, debt burdens that far outweigh any stimulus or aid that poor nations receive, human trafficking, and exploitation through policies that extract resources from local economies without sufficient concern for adequate payment or sustainability – hurts us all and contribute to the violence and instability of our world. There is no question, when we place the way power is used and managed in our world alongside the Gospel's teaching on power, submission, servanthood and sacrifice, that we need a new way to think about and practice power. We need the Gospel to shift our values away from a simplistic and naive embrace of all that is rich, dominant and strong, to recognise the power in weakness, simplicity, generosity and collaboration. We need to learn to share power instead of grasping and hoarding it. And we need to learn that all who are truly powerful operate under a higher authority that enables them to use their power for the common good, and not just for interest groups or

individuals. The authority of Jesus which was derived from his submission to his Divine Parent is a challenging example for us, and the destructive power-hunger and paranoia that plagued Saul as he started to lose power is a strong warning. If our world is find peace and justice we desperately need to face the broken power structures in our nations, our communities and our world.

LOCAL APPLICATION: We each deal with power relationships on a daily basis – between parents and children, between teachers and learners, between citizens and government, between employer and employee. In some of these relationships we hold power, and in others we don't. In some we own the "wealth" (be it expertise, opportunity, relationships, material possessions, or money) and in some we are the poor. The Gospel gives us clear challenges about how we navigate these power dynamics, and reminds us that the ultimate authority to which we answer, and which we are called to imitate, is that of Jesus, who always favours the poor and weak. On a personal level, our relationships thrive when we embrace mutuality, collaboration and service, as opposed to forced submission of spouses or children. On a community level, our organisations, churches, schools and neighbourhoods thrive when we embrace co-operation, collaboration, service and respect, as opposed to separation, legalism, self-interest and stereotyping. It may seem contradictory to say that it is in weakness and giving up our power that we find life and true authority, but Paul's example reveals the truth of this – as do the testimonies of thousands of Christ-followers since. Perhaps what we really need to learn is more of the David and Jonathan way of relationships and power, and less of the Saul and David. The only way to learn this is to open ourselves to the surprising and miraculous power of Jesus and the transforming message of the Gospel that he preached.

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

1 Samuel 17:(1a, 4-11, 19-23) 32-40:

- What's your Goliath? I read this passage, and see such a cartoon childhood-Bible-story image. But for the Israelites - terror. What would be a comparable image of terror for you?
- :39 - David removing the armor reminds me of a scene from the movie *Contact* - Jodie Foster, traveling in the machine, is strapped to a chair that wasn't in the specifications, for her safety, supposedly. But eventually she realizes that the chair is only holding her back, and once she unstraps herself from it, she floats calmly and safely. What kind of things do we try to add into our lives that are only holding us back?
- appearances - David's early story is all about appearances. Goliath thinks he knows what David is all about because of how he looks. What would your appearance say about you? Is that who you are? When do you let appearances influence what you think about others?

Psalm 9:9-20:

- "a stronghold for the oppressed" - God is the safe place for those who have no other.
- Not my favorite psalm - a lot of "I hate my enemies - get 'em, God!" talk.
- "let the nations know that they are only human." What a timely reminder, eh? Someone needs to remind the nations today of this truth - not God, but humans.

2 Corinthians 6:1-13:

- "an acceptable time" - God's time and our time don't always seem to mesh. We're so rushed, we rarely seem able to wait for God's action. But when the acceptable time comes, when God acts, we don't always seem ready to respond! Jesus was all about the time being now, the kingdom being at hand - here, arrived. Do we miss the message? Are we late?
- :4-:10 - What a description from Paul, and how he has sought to mold himself and his ministry. Can you apply these descriptors to yourself? What would your 'list' look like?
- "no restriction in our affection" "open wide your hearts also" - beautiful. It is hard to live without putting conditions on our love of others. How open are your hearts?

Mark 4:35-41:

- "Have you no faith?" If I were the disciples, I admit, I'd be on Jesus' case too! After all, early in the gospel account, maybe they don't know him well enough yet.
- Still, aren't they fisherman, many of them? And Jesus a rabbi? What exactly were they expecting of him? A miracle performer only?
- I imagine Jesus wasn't thrilled, either, that they accused him of not caring. Why, in crisis times, do we sometimes throw out the most hurtful things we can think of to say?

by Beth Quick.

SERMON OUTLINE

Mark 4:35-41: Let us go across...

Jesus had decided *when evening had come*, to cross the Sea of Galilee:- *they took him with them in the boat...*

1. The Sea – beautiful harp-shaped inland lough full of marine life – 13x7 miles with a multitude of fishing boats..
2. The Sea-farers – most of the disciples were experienced fishermen – well able to cope with a variety of conditions having spent long days and nights out in their boats...
3. The Storm – frequent on the Sea – winds blasting down the valleys & stirring up the waters *37A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped* – with the natural human reaction of the disciples – FEAR! *'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?'*
4. The Saviour – what a contrast as we look at Jesus! *38 he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion* – safe & secure in the arms of his heavenly Father... On being awakened by the disciples Jesus simply *rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!'* – demonstrating his divine power over creation – even the most fearful situation.. He challenges the disciples: *'Why are you afraid? 40 Have you still no faith?'* They needed to trust in his saving presence... Jesus likewise still challenges us today... We too so often are caught up in the storms of life – uncertainty, fear, sickness anxiety, bereavement – tossed about by the waves of adversity... To whom can we turn? – only Jesus - *whom even the wind and the sea obey...* the Son of God & Lord of Creation... *41 they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this..?'*

by Norman Porteous

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

[The Sleeping Jesus,](#) the Rev. Sarah Jackson Shelton, *Day 1*
This is worth reading - and even just for the last three paragraphs.
http://day1.org/1326-the_sleeping_jesus

Church of Scotland - Starters for Sundays. Two pdfs with ideas for worship
http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/starters_for_sunday/articles/june

[Sermons and Liturgies for Year B,](#) Richard J. Fairchild
<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/b-or11se.php>

CHILDREN

Worshiping with Children - Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown, 2012.
Materials for both the Old Testament and Gospel readings. Both of which could easily be adapted for use with adults.
<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2012/05/year-b-proper-7-12th-sunday-in-ordinary.html>

[Sermons and Liturgies for Year B,](#) Richard J. Fairchild. Outline address for Fathers Day
<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/b-or11se.php>

["Sermon of the Week,"](#) Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Coloring Pages, Puzzles.
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

"Are We There Yet?" Frances Woodruff, On the Chancel Steps - Focus is on 2 Corinthians 6, 1 - 13 and specifically 6.2b
<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2012/06/10/there/>

"David Meets Goliath," Dianne Deming, Childrens Sermons Today
<http://childrenssermonstoday.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/june-24-2012.html>

Children's Sermon, Weekly Devotions, Faith Formation Journeys. On Mark 4. 35 - 41
<http://faithformationjourneys.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/childrens-sermon-june-24-2012-mark-435.html>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

O God Our Help In Ages Past
For The Healing Of The Nations, Lord, We Pray With One Accord
Fierce Raged The Tempest O'er The Deep
God Is Our Strength And Refuge
Jesus Calls Us O'er The Tumult
How Long?
O God Our Help
www.churchnewsireland.org

Indescribable
God Of Justice
We All Bow Down