

St Jerome | Thursday 30 September 2021

Today is Thursday the 30 September, the feast of St Jerome, in the 26th week of Ordinary time.

The choir of Portsmouth Cathedral sing Psalm 42 – Like as the Hart desireth the waterbrooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God.

Today's reading is from Psalm 18 of the Grail version, which can be found as Psalm 19 in other versions of the Bible.

Psalm 18 (Grail)

To the leader. A Psalm of David.
The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;
yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,
which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.
Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and nothing is hidden from its heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the decrees of the Lord are sure,
making wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is clear,
enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring for ever;

the ordinances of the Lord are true
and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey,
and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
But who can detect their errors?
Clear me from hidden faults.
Keep back your servant also from the insolent;
do not let them have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Today is the feast day of St Jerome, a scholar and a mystic, a man quick to anger and equally quick to remorse, a man who walked a very crooked path to faith. A very human, human being. Take a moment to consider your own human-ness and to come before the Lord with all that you are.

David, the author of this Psalm, was also very human. Despite his kingship and earthly power, this psalm illustrates the closeness and nature of his relationship with God. No matter what his struggle or distress, David trusted that God, as the modern phrase goes, 'would be there for him'. What has been your experience in difficult times?

'The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul... sweeter also than honey,

and drippings of the honeycomb.' Is this how you experience the law and ordinances of the Lord? Spend some time reflecting on this imagery...

As you hear it again, notice the rich imagery used throughout the Psalm and notice what stays with you...

You might want to repeat the final line of this Psalm as a closing prayer to God today: 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart

be acceptable to you,

O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.'

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Today is Thursday the 30 September, the feast of St Jerome, in the 26th week of Ordinary time.

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