

Lectionary readings: Amos 8: 1-12; Psalm 52; Colossians 1: 15-28; Luke 10: 38-42

For reflection and prayer

- **Amos 8:** This is a bleak passage depicting a society thoroughly materialistic, measuring everything in money, self-centred, selfish, worshipping but their hearts not in it. The people of Amos' day didn't have an appetite for the word of God. Could this describe our society, I wonder? Are our hearts fully engaged in worship, or are we going through the motions, not really letting God touch our hearts. Do we have a hunger to know how God wants us to live? Amos speaks of a time when there will be a famine of hearing the word of God; because they have hardened their hearts to such an extent, they probably won't recognise God's word when they hear it. So Amos speaks of punishment, a punishment the people bring upon themselves. Much to challenge us here.
- **Psalm 52:** Another bleak description which could be a comment on our society today: greed, lies, exploitation of the poor, lovers of wealth, ears deaf to the cries of the oppressed. What characterises our lives as Christians? Is it love and compassion and a desire for justice, no matter what the cost? Do we trust in God's unfailing love rather than in our riches? Do we value people and try to build them up, affirm them, encourage them, and respond with generosity of spirit, rather than criticism?
- **Colossians 1:** This is a message of hope after the bleakness of the first two readings. God takes all our brokenness and offers us the gift of wholeness in Christ.

This is the central message of the Gospel - that we can become whole human beings. *'The glory of God is a human being fully alive.'* (Irenaeus) Perhaps we have lost sight of this, for we live out of our heads and think that the most important thing is to get our beliefs right. But God wants to touch our hearts and transform us so that we are fully alive with His life. To what extent are we letting God touch our heart and change us?

- **Luke 10:** The story of Martha and Mary challenges us to reflect on whether we have got our lives out of balance. We might like to reflect this week on whether there is too much activity, busy-ness, too much emphasis on doing in our lives, and not enough silent waiting on God, listening to Him. Are we so preoccupied with all the things we have to do that we miss the unique opportunity that the present moment offers? Are we trying to fulfil the expectations society has of us, and so missing becoming the people God created us to be? Mary broke out of the role that was expected of the society of her day, and sat at Jesus' feet, a place reserved for men at that time. And as a result she experienced blessing. May we this week take time to reflect on how we are living our lives, whose expectations we are trying to fulfil, and how much balance there is between being and doing.

A prayer

'Lord, this moment is Yours; mine for You, and Yours for me. I need You. I cannot survive without You. And yet I go on rushing through life as if I could do everything in my own strength. Forgive me. I know that You care for me at all times, and that I am always in Your hands; but I still need to pause and let my heart and spirit be loved by You into loving You again.' (Angela Ashwin)