

## Reflection for Trinity 8

‘Do not be afraid little flock’, says Jesus at the beginning of today’s gospel. What does he mean by this? Is it literal? Is he referring to the size of the group he is talking to? ‘A little flock’ is something that confronts many a preacher in churches these days especially in rural areas. Or is he using the word little as a term of endearment?

There are those who would maintain the former to be the case, in which case we might have an exclusive little group who feel they are the real Christians to whom God has chosen to give the Kingdom. But many read Luke 12.32 as a sign of love. It feels truer to Jesus’s compassionate heart. Are we not all “little”, vulnerable and dependent in his eyes? “Like sheep without a shepherd” Matthew 9.36. This is the meaning that comes over to me as the right one. But what are the “little flock” afraid of? *Do not be afraid* is not spread evenly through the gospels, but it is a phrase we are very used to hearing Jesus use. Luke has it most, using it on five occasions. Jesus tells Paul not to be afraid in Acts at his conversion. What does Jesus mean on this occasion, speaking to his little flock? I wonder how you read it.

*Phil Baker*



**NEXT SUNDAY 17.08.25 Trinity 9**

10.30am in the Church

**READINGS:** OT Jeremiah 23: 23-29

NT Hebrews 11: 29-12: 2

GOSPEL Luke 12: 49-56



### CONTACT US

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## St Thomas, Exeter

**10th August 2025**

**Eighth Sunday after Trinity**

**10.30am in the Church**

### Today

**Sung Eucharist**

*Hymn Numbers*

*478 The God of Abraham praise*

*520 Thy kingdom come! On bended knee*

*186 Great is thy faithfulness*

### Wednesday 13th August

**10am** Holy Communion (BCP)

### Thursday 14th August

**9.30—11am** St Thomas Tots

**10.30-12noon** Knit & Natter. See notices

**Please note** Jimmy’s café is closed.

### Friday 15th August

**9.30am** Morning Prayer

**10am** Staff Meeting

### Saturday 16th August

**11am-12 noon** 4th seasonal noticing nature walk. Meet at the entrance to the hall.



## Collect

Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

## Genesis 15: 1-6

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.' But the word of the Lord came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.' He brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

## Hebrews 11: 1-3, 8-16

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foun-

dations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, 'as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.' All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

## Luke 12: 32-40

Jesus said, 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. 'But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'

## Post Communion

Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands that have taken holy things; may the ears which have heard your word be deaf to clamour and dispute; may the tongues which have sung your praise be free from deceit; may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love shine with the light of hope; and may the bodies which have been fed with your body be refreshed with the fullness of your life; glory to you for ever. **Amen**

## Notices

**Knit & Natter** From the 24th July we shall be meeting in St Thomas Pleasure Ground every Thursday morning from 10.30 till 12 noon, weather permitting. If it's wet, we shall be in Jess and Jimmy's café (118 Cowick Street). Do join us, or just come to say hello, especially if you aren't a regular at Maple Road.

**Thank you** to those people who offered their services for cleaning the church after the call for volunteers last Sunday morning. There are still places available on the cleaning rota and for anyone who is able to help with the occasional arrangement of the flowers.

**Global Week of Prayer** 1st-7th September Churches across St Thomas are encouraged to be united in prayer during this week. A room will be made available at Riverside Church (24 hours a day!) for people to pray for whatever concerns them: our churches, our community, our country, the world. See Ian if you want to sign up for a one hour slot.

**Advance Notice for your diaries. On Thursday 11th September** probably starting at 6pm there will be a meeting for the congregation to discuss what qualities we should be looking for in our new Incumbent. The meeting will be led by the Archdeacon of Exeter, the Revd Andrew Beane. This is a very important meeting and we hope that as many people as possible will attend.

