

## Notes for the readings for Trinity 3, Proper 7

### Old Testament: Job 38: 1-11

The Book of Job consists of an opening account of Job as Satan is given leave to test the faith of Job. Subsequently, it consists of a number of dialogues between Job and his “friends’, the so-called ‘Job’s comforters’. They seek to convince Job that as he has suffered calamities and ill health, he must be being punished for his sins and should seek forgiveness. All the time, Job has maintained his innocence, trying to understand the cause of his troubles. Today’s passage is the first time that God confronts Job, but gives no explanation for his sufferings. Rather, God points out the limits to Job’s understanding of things. In the end, all is of faith.

### Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6: 1-13

The start and end of this passage sets out Paul’s call to the Corinthian Christians to respond to the message of reconciliation which comes from Christ, which is the true work of the Church and which he sets out in more detail in the previous chapter. Paul links his work with that of Jesus, seeking to extend the Kingdom by word and deed. Paul then speaks of his own ministry – the troubles he has put up with and the hardships he has endured. Throughout, Paul has sought to maintain his integrity. At the end of the day, when so many are rejecting God’s claims, belittling the Church and his people, it will be our integrity which will carry the day and bear witness to the truth – that inner resilience which carries us through the storms of life and comes from a daily walk with God.

### Gospel: Mark 4: 35-41

This is the well-known account of Jesus stilling the storm. To understand this event, we need to bear in mind the work of God as he brought the formless and chaotic world into order, his Spirit moving over the waters bring with it to life and goodness. This is the action of God through history, as he seeks to calm his people and point them in the right way. Here, Jesus is asleep in the boat, yet his companions, experienced sailors all, are terrified. Jesus wakes and stills the storm, and we see the same power of God at work. Just as Jesus brings order and peace to human life, so he does here to nature, giving us a glimpse of the fulfilment of all things, when destruction and death are no more. There are two further things to say. The first is that tradition has seen the boat as the Church, tossed to and fro by the turbulence of life, yet secure in the company of Jesus. And the second says the same for individuals, but reminds us that it is often when we are at our lowest and most fearful that we find Christ beside us.