

18 January 2026, Choral Matins
Ezekiel 2:1 – 3:4 and Galatians 1:11-end
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“Where is this information coming from?” “Can I trust the source of this information?” These are questions that anyone living in an increasingly conflicted and connected world should ask before drawing conclusions. From fake news to images created by artificial intelligence, we find ourselves in a culture where truth feels increasingly disposable. We are also witnessing another difficult chapter in history: the rise of oppressive leaders, the growing suspicion of reasonable disagreement, and fading trust in respectful debate. Discerning what is true and what is fabricated is becoming ever more challenging as we lose touch with one another. So, how might today’s lessons speak to such challenges? What truth should guide us? And what is the value of holding fast to Christian principles?

Our first lesson today, taken from the book of Ezekiel, concerns a vision and God’s command to the prophet. In it, Ezekiel is given a scroll to eat, which we can understand as an act of learning. Upon eating this scroll—symbolising learning—Ezekiel describes it as tasting as sweet as honey. He did not initially know how he would feel, but he followed God’s command, and the scroll he consumed contained God’s words. This scroll symbolises God’s word and knowledge, and eating it symbolises internalising that word and that knowledge. And Ezekiel describes the taste in his mouth as sweet as honey. This allegory, rich with symbolism, delightfully expresses what God’s words feel like when we take them into ourselves and allow them to nourish us and shape who we are. After this act of receiving and internalising God’s word, Ezekiel is sent to the house of Israel to speak God’s message. The truth comes from God, God works through Ezekiel, and Ezekiel follows God’s work with awe and responds in faithful obedience.

In our second lesson, we read from Paul’s letter to the Galatians. It is evident from this correspondence that there is a conflict between Paul and the churches of Galatia, which he addresses in the letter. In the preceding verses of the letter, we read about Paul’s disappointment that churches in Galatia are listening to different interpretations of Gospel. But Paul is an exemplary communicator and conflict resolver in the face of false teachings. He explains himself, and the importance and nature of the Gospel he proclaims, clearly and patiently. We can imagine how it must have been very difficult to do so at a time when many others claimed authority over the Gospel and over truth. Even in the midst of

conflict and the confusion stirred up by others who distorted the Gospel, he addresses the people he is writing to as *“brothers and sisters.”*

Paul speaks of the special nature of the Gospel that he proclaims, which does not come from human origin. He says he was not taught it but it came to him through Jesus Christ. While these words affirm his authority, it is also important to emphasise the transformation Paul underwent after encountering the risen Christ. In a world where those in power or those who pursue power claim moral purity and distrust change, Paul openly writes about his past wrongdoings. His journey from being unjust and oppressive to preaching the Gospel is astonishing.

Paul recounts his travels, and how people in Syria and Cilicia said: *“That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed”*. This change is extraordinary and it comes from God. And it is experienced by Paul. The faith that he once tried to destroy as an oppressor has become the faith he now preaches and lives. Paul mentions how people glorified God because of this change. This is very important. He says: *“And they glorified God in me”*. That means God’s transformative work in us can inspire others, and we should be open to this change, acknowledging our past mistakes. Truth comes from God, and it can work within us as we can examine it and seek to live by it. This is the truth that can guide us.

The complexity and difficulty of our time is evident. There are so many oppressive leaders and groups. There are so many false teachers seeking to drive people away from Christian ideals, using divisive rhetoric and disinformation. As we mark the second week of Epiphany, today is also the first day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity—a time to reflect on the importance of unity, faith, and truth, and embracing different opinions, and indeed, embracing difference itself.

We can see God’s work in those who seek unity rather than division. We can see God’s work in those who heal rather than those who spread fear. We can see God’s work in those who welcome with love and love their neighbours as themselves, rather than judge. The truth, the word that we trust comes from God; its source is God. And that is the source that we can cling to in our present time. That truth has seen many difficult times, those who believed in it are still being persecuted even today, but it endures with God’s love.

May the sweetness of God’s words and works spread across all peoples and nations, and may we, by God’s grace, seek to live by God’s teaching and God’s love, contributing to the Kingdom on earth.