

20th August 2017

Trinity 10

Proper 15 Green



Collect

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Romans 11:1-2A, 29-32 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Remnant of Israel

11¹ I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham,^[a] a member of the tribe of Benjamin.² God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.³⁰ For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience,³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now^[e] receive mercy.³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

Footnotes: a. or *one of the offspring of Abraham*. b. Some manuscripts omit *now*.

COMMENT: Countering the fear of many of his contemporary Jews, Paul sought to remind them that God had not rejected them by bringing Gentiles into the developing tradition that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah. Rather, Jews and Gentiles alike have now received the full measure of God's mercy through Christ.

Matthew 15:10-28 English Standard Version (ESV)

What Defiles a Person

¹⁰ And he called the people to him and said to them, "Hear and understand: ¹¹ it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person." ¹² Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were

offended when they heard this saying?”¹³ He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.¹⁴ Let them alone; they are blind guides.^[a] And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”¹⁵ But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.”¹⁶ And he said, “Are you also still without understanding?¹⁷ Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled?^[b]¹⁸ But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.²⁰ These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

The Faith of a Canaanite Woman

²¹ And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon.²² And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.”²³ But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.”²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.”²⁶ And he answered, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”²⁷ She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly.^[c]

Footnotes: a. some manuscripts add *of the blind*. b. Greek *is expelled into the latrine*. c. Greek *from that hour*.

COMMENT: There seems little doubt that Matthew fully intended to link the parable and teaching in 15:10-20 with the story of Jesus healing the daughter of a Canaanite woman in a foreign country as two expressions of the universal love of God for all peoples. This important lesson touches us pointedly at a time when we too are all prone to divide the good from the bad, our race, our country, our tribe, our folk, our faith from all others. In the Iraq war hitherto decent men and women got sucked into behaviour in their treatment of captives that was truly appalling. Young men get indoctrinated into Islamic extremism, or extreme Irish nationalism, where hatred of the enemy leads them to maim or kill, often indiscriminately. The Psychologist Philip Zimbardo demonstrates how evil can be caught – almost like a cold (see “The Lucifer Effect – How Good People turn Evil” Random House, 2007). The Law now acknowledges how the heart can be influence to the bad – there is an

offence of inciting hatred or violence – and yet developments of the last thirty or forty years – policies pushed by political parties, have done much to influence the present climate. On the right, epitomised by greedy Bankers and MPs with their expenses, are those who have gained economically by our present system which is driving the gap between the rich and poor ever wider. Those on the left are not off the hook either, as the social experiment of suggesting all forms of parenting are the same, and their disdain for positive moral codes and the Christian Faith, have robbed many of any ethical standards by which to live. In regard to wanting to rid society of any Christian or religious influence, it has not been replaced by neutral secularism but by the left or right’s “isms”, ideologies and dogmas. It is little wonder that we need the present “inciting” laws as a negative corrective. The influence on the heart for good begins with strong and supportive families – and probably the best model is the traditional family. Schooling should include the teaching of respect – your old fashioned moral codes if you like, and that we have responsibilities as well as rights – the old fashioned “do your duty”! We need to pray that common sense will guide any reforms – rather than the creeds and ideologies of the political parties. Perhaps we cannot do any worse than place our faith in the healing of God for our society rather than man. Also, the two readings; Romans and the second part of Matthew, demonstrate that the Kingdom is inclusive. Our Lord’s comments which may seem hard, do not exclude, but that his ministry during his mortal life was of necessity limited to his homeland. It is his disciples who at his command go into all the world (Matthew 28:19). The comment of our Lord, however elucidated a confession of faith – God responds to our heartfelt prayer.

Psalm 67 1-3, 5, 7-8 *Deus misereatur* Grail Psalter

℟️ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

¹ *For the Choirmaster. With stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song.*

² O God, be gracious and bless us
and let your face shed its light upon us. [*Selah*]

³ So will your ways be known upon earth
and all nations learn your saving help. ℟️

⁵ Let the nations be glad and exult
for you rule the world with justice.
With fairness you rule the peoples,
you guide the nations on earth [*Selah*]. ℟️

⁷ The earth has yielded its fruit
for God, our God, has blessed us.

⁸ May God still give us his blessing
till the ends of the earth revere him.

℟ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

**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.**

COMMENT: This simple hymn of praise may well have been a thanksgiving prayer after a successful harvest had brought relief from a severe famine. (vs. 6) It most likely found an appropriate place in the feast of Tabernacles (Succoth) prominently observed after the Exile. As a time for singing and dancing, this festival featured many liturgical compositions which may also have included such Psalms as 113-119 and 136. The untranslatable word, *Selah*, which occurs twice in the text, may have indicated a place for cymbals to sound. The superscription indicates that stringed instruments were also used as accompaniment. Human voices in chorus, however, made the main music of worship in the temple. The psalm would have been sung antiphonally. Another notable quality of this psalm is its missionary character drawn from such sources as Deutero-Isaiah [Isaiah Chapters 40–55] and Jonah. God's goodness to Israel, so visible in the abundant harvest, should be a revelation to all the world of God's righteous ways in dealing with those who trust God. Accordingly, all nations should join Israel in reverence and praise.

Post Communion

Lord God, whose Son is the true vine and the source of life, ever giving himself that the world may live: may we so receive within ourselves the power of his death and passion that, in his saving cup, we may share his glory and be made perfect in his love; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

Blessing

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**