

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019

**Easter 7**

Sunday after Ascension Day

White



**Collect**

O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

**Acts 16:16-34** English Standard Version (ESV)

**Paul and Silas in Prison**

16<sup>16</sup> As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. <sup>17</sup> She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants<sup>[a]</sup> of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” <sup>18</sup> And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour.

<sup>19</sup> But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

<sup>20</sup> And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. <sup>21</sup> They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.” <sup>22</sup> The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. <sup>23</sup> And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. <sup>24</sup> Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

**The Philippian Jailer Converted**

<sup>25</sup> About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, <sup>26</sup> and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. <sup>27</sup> When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were

open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. <sup>28</sup> But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” <sup>29</sup> And the jailer<sup>[b]</sup> called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup> Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” <sup>31</sup> And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” <sup>32</sup> And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup> And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptised at once, he and all his family. <sup>34</sup> Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

**Footnotes:** a. Greek *bondservants*. b. Greek *he*.

**COMMENT:** With this double miracle story Luke makes the point that in Paul’s ministry, as in that of the other apostles, the divinely empowered ministry of Jesus continued. The miracle of casting out a demon from the girl with the spirit of divination led to the apostles’ imprisonment. Their release from prison and the conversion of their jailer would serve to convince Luke’s Gentile audience of the authenticity of the Christian message. It is worth pointing out one element in this text, which has generated so many evangelistic sermons: “What must I do to be saved? .... Believe on the Lord Jesus....” However, this was not the complete exchange and answer. Verse 32 plainly informs us that more instruction followed as Paul and Silas “spoke the word of the Lord to him and all who were in his house.” In spite of the fact that baptism of the whole household followed “that same hour ...without delay,” this did not occur without further catechetical instruction. These details leave no room for an anti-intellectual attitude toward conversion.

## **John 17:20-26** English Standard Version (ESV)

### **The High Priestly Prayer**

17 <sup>20</sup>“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup> that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. <sup>24</sup> Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. <sup>25</sup> O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup> I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

**COMMENT:** This section of what is known as the “High Priestly Prayer” reveals what Jesus’ life, death and resurrection meant for the Christian community for which the author was writing in the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD. It also summarises the discourse which began in chapter 13 as well as continuing much of same theme found throughout the Gospel as proclaimed from the beginning. The whole prayer covers familiar themes: Jesus death and resurrection as glorification; eternal life as knowing God through faith in Jesus, the Christ/Messiah; the disciples as those chosen to represent Christ in and to the world; and the disciples’ need to be sustained in their mission through the truth they have received from Jesus and now are to share with the world. In this excerpt, John attempted to inspire and encourage his own community of disciples as many as 60 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus as revealing the true nature of God as love became the central message of the apostolic church. Their faithfulness in difficult times would keep them true to their Christian faith and in loving fellowship with each other. It would also enable them to accomplish their mission of making the “glory” of Christ, the Son of God, known as well as maintain the elusive spiritual unity the mission requires. This is still good news for us two thousand years later. Alas, through subsequent generations and probably in John’s own time, the disciple community has never achieved the level of faithfulness to which this prayer summoned us. Yet we must still make it our own prayer for our own community and our own time. For as this prayer bids: We must all be one, so the world may believe.

### **Psalm 97** *Dominus regnavit* Grail Psalter

**℟** **Rejoice, you just, in the Lord; give glory to his holy name.**

<sup>1</sup> The Lord is king, let earth rejoice,  
let all the coastlands be glad.

<sup>2</sup> Cloud and darkness are his raiment;  
his throne, justice and right. **℟**

<sup>3</sup> A fire prepares his path;  
it burns up his foes on every side.

<sup>4</sup> His lightnings light up the world,  
the earth trembles at the sight. **℟**

<sup>5</sup> The mountains melt like wax  
before the Lord of all the earth.

<sup>6</sup> The skies proclaim his justice;  
all peoples see his glory. **℟**

<sup>7</sup> Let those who serve idols be ashamed,  
those who boast of their worthless gods.  
All you spirits, worship him. **℟**

<sup>8</sup> Zion hears and is glad;  
the people of Judah rejoice  
because of your judgments, O Lord. **℟**

<sup>9</sup> For you indeed are the Lord  
most high above all the earth,  
exalted far above all spirits.

**✠ Rejoice, you just, in the Lord; give glory to his holy name.**

<sup>10</sup> The Lord loves those who hate evil;  
he guards the souls of his saints;  
he sets them free from the wicked. **✠**

<sup>11</sup> Light shines forth for the just  
and joy for the upright of heart.

<sup>12</sup> Rejoice, you just, in the Lord;  
give glory to his holy name. **✠**

**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 psalm is one of a group of psalms celebrating the enthronement of God. The others are Pss. 47, 93, 96, 98 and 99) In many respects, the vocabulary of all these psalms is similar. This enthronement celebration occurred at each Jewish New Year. It acknowledged God's awesome power, God's justice and God's absolute supremacy over all creation.

### **Short Preface**

And now we give you thanks that, after he had ascended far above all heavens, and was seated at the right hand of your majesty, he sent forth upon the universal Church your holy and life-giving Spirit; that through his glorious power the joy of the everlasting gospel might go forth into all the world.

### **Post Communion**

Eternal God, giver of love and power, your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world to preach the gospel of his kingdom: confirm us in this mission, and help us to live the good news we proclaim; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **Blessing**

The Spirit of truth lead you into all truth, give you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and strengthen you to proclaim the word and works of God; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**