

Sunday 15th January 2016

The Second Sunday of Epiphany

White



Collect

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; 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**

1 Corinthians 1:1-9 English Standard Version (ESV)

Greeting

¹ ¹ Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, ²To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: ³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

COMMENT: Paul's letter begins in the normal fashion for correspondence of that time. Sosthenes may have been the scribe to whom Paul dictated the letter. For whatever reason, Paul seems to have had difficulty writing himself (cf. Gal.6:11). The letter is addressed to "the church of God that is in Corinth" and undoubtedly the believers there met in some kind of assembly, designated by the Greek word "ecclesia." The Septuagint translation into Greek, before the birth of Christ, used this word to translate the Hebrew "qahal," which meant "the people of God." It had become one of Paul's favorite terms occurring no less than 22 times in this one letter. It expressed how he saw the company of believers as set apart by God for a divinely appointed vocation (Cf. 7:20-21). Their being sanctified (Gk= hegiasmenois) and called "saints" did not necessarily imply moral perfection. It did mean, however, that they had responded to the gospel in such a way that their lives could never be the same. To "call on the name of the Lord" as Paul uses the phrase here has the sense of confessing Jesus as Lord, not simply praying to him. Paul moves from the salutation to an introductory thanksgiving. While this may be normal for ordinary correspondence, in this situation it may be ironic compared with what follows in the later parts of the letter. Yet we cannot deny that Paul had a sincere love for those to whom he had brought the gospel. As a wise and loving pastor, he could only have confronted them as he did if he held them very much in his heart. In his thanksgiving Paul states briefly the

inestimable value of Christian faith by telling the Corinthians that they have been greatly enriched spiritually and strengthened to live Christ's way until he comes again. The introduction ends with Paul's assurance that their Corinthians reward for faithfulness will be - even now is - strength for life's struggle, freedom from guilt, and fellowship with Christ

John 1:29-42 English Standard Version (ESV)

Behold, the Lamb of God

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, 'after me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptising with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." ³² And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptise with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptises with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

Jesus calls the First Disciples

³⁵ The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. ^[a] ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus ^[b] was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). ⁴² He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter ^[c]).

Footnotes: a. that is, about 4 pm. b. Greek *him* c. *Cephas* and *Peter* are from the word for *rock* in Aramaic and Greek, respectively.

COMMENT: John recognised Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." This was one of the main themes of John's Gospel. The term "the Lamb of God" had its roots in the Jewish ritual of sacrifice. There seems little doubt, however, that the daily offerings of unblemished lambs in the temple came to John's mind as he began his narrative of Jesus ministry. This symbolism of the sacrificial lamb was later adopted by the church as part of the order for the Eucharist. John himself had this in mind too in his correlation of the death of Jesus with the hour when the Pascal lamb was killed. (See John 19:31-36.) Note that this gospel never states that John baptised Jesus (the author may have assumed we already know this). John merely tells his disciples that while he baptised with water, Jesus would baptise with the Holy Spirit. Note also that it was John, not Jesus, who saw the Spirit descending as a dove. Is this a reflection of the Spirit brooding over the waters of the Jordan as on the day of creation and Noah's dove searching for a place to settle? Christian art uses the dove to decorate baptismal fonts, to remind us that our baptism is efficacious only because Christ was baptised and that in our baptism, as in his, the inward reality of the action is the descent of the Holy Spirit. The next day, two of John disciples left John and followed Jesus, first out of curiosity, then out of conviction. Surprisingly, it was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, who made the first

confession that Jesus was the Messiah. If the gospel came from the personal testimony of John, the son of Zebedee, we have here an independent tradition perhaps more accurate than that of the Synoptic Gospels. How else would we know the nickname Jesus gave in Aramaic to what appears the most unlikely of persons the “Rock?”

Psalm 40 *Expectans, expectavi*

℟ Here I am, Lord! I come to do your will.

¹ *For the Choirmaster. Of David. A Psalm.*

² I waited, I waited for the Lord
and he stooped down to me;
he heard my cry. ℟

³ He drew me from the deadly pit,
from the miry clay.
He set my feet upon a rock
and made my footsteps firm. ℟

⁴ He put a new song into my mouth,
praise of our God.
Many shall see and fear
and shall trust in the Lord. ℟

⁵ Happy the man who has placed
his trust in the Lord
and has not gone over to the rebels
who follow false gods. ℟

⁶ How many, O Lord my God,
are the wonders and designs
that you have worked for us;
you have no equal.
Should I proclaim and speak of them,
they are more than I can tell! ℟

⁷ You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings,
but an open ear.
You do not ask for holocaust and victim.

⁸ Instead, here am I. ℟

In the scroll of the book it stands written

⁹ that I should do your will.
My God, I delight in your law
in the depth of my heart. ℟

¹⁰ Your justice I have proclaimed
in the great assembly.
My lips I have not sealed;
you know it, O Lord. ℟

¹¹ I have not hidden your justice in my heart
but declared your faithful help.
I have not hidden your love and your truth
from the great assembly.

℟ Here I am, Lord! I come to do your will.

¹² O Lord, you will not withhold
your compassion from me.
Your merciful love and your truth
will always guard me. **℟**

**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 is the first part of a composite psalm which originally existed as two separate entities. Proof is found in Psalm 70 where vss.13-17 occur independently. Verse 12 is a transitional bridge between the two parts. In this first section (verses 1-11 - our reading today) it appears that the psalmist rejoiced and thanked God for recovery from a serious illness or some other unstated disaster. The second was an appeal for help in the face of enemies. In our reading the poet did not die; hence his rejoicing and renewed trust in God expressed so vividly in verse 3. His persistent trust in the LORD triumphed and brought him a new sense of divine grace not only to himself, but to his fellow believers with whom he could now worship (verse 5). Rather than making a ritual sacrifice or an offering, the psalmist had discovered that telling others of his deliverance would be his way of expressing gratitude. He had been given a wondrous insight into the LORD's ways and the LORD's will. He cannot but rejoice and tell of his rich experience of the LORD's steadfast love (verses 9-11).

Short Preface

And now we give you thanks because, in the incarnation of the Word, a new light has dawned upon the world, that all the nations may be brought out of darkness to see the radiance of your glory.

Post Communion

God of glory, you nourish us with your Word who is the bread of life: fill us with your Holy Spirit that through us the light of your glory may shine in all the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**