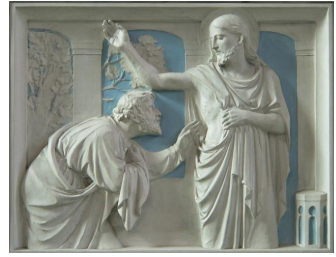


Sunday 24th April 2014

Second Sunday of Easter

White



Collect

Almighty Father, you have given your only Son to die for our sins and to rise again for our justification: grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Acts 2:14, 22-32 English Standard Version (ESV)

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—²³ this Jesus,^[a] delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. ²⁵ For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; ²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. ²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’ ²⁹ “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.

Footnote: a. Greek *this one*.

COMMENT: From the very first, the Apostolic Church believed that God had kept the promises of the Old Testament and had brought salvation to Israel. This had occurred through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, now exalted to the right hand of God. The Holy Spirit given to the church at Pentecost was the sign of Christ's presence and power. Salvation will culminate in the return of Christ to judge the living and the dead. As witnesses to the resurrection, the apostles were the appointed messengers of this Good News (i.e. Gospel). As representatives of Christ in the world, they appealed to all who heard them to turn to God and offered them God's forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. This reading introduces that basic message. Note the audacious thrust of Peter's charge: "This man ... you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law." No shilly-shallying there! This accusation may well reflect the period when Acts appears to have been written in the 80s AD. At that time the Church and Pharisee-dominated Judaism engaged in a major conflict in which Jewish Christians were expelled from synagogues. Christ's victory over death symbolised by the resurrection assumed critical significance for the church in the age of Roman persecution through the following centuries. A few decades earlier Paul made this a central part of his message and likened baptism to this victory over death. Shortly thereafter, Nero persecuted Christians in Rome, blaming them for the burning of the city which he himself had caused. Both Peter and Paul may have died in that persecution. Without doubt the Resurrection formed an essential part of the original message proclaimed from the beginning of the apostolic witness. While we can never be specific about the details of what happens when we die, we can still proclaim the Resurrection as the basis for our hope for life beyond death.

John 20:19-31 English Standard Version (ESV)

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,^[a] Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

Jesus and Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin,^[b] was not with them when Jesus came.²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand,

and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Purpose of This Book

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Footnotes: a. Greek *Ioudaioi* probably refers here to Jewish religious leaders, and others under their influence, in that time. b. Greek *Didymus*.

COMMENT: John comments on the Resurrection appearances – this is now the evening of Resurrection Sunday. The author of John is more than aware of the Lucan Pentecost tradition but links the giving of the Spirit to the Resurrection. He also deals with the issue of doubt. In the opening of the story is a confession of faith, which can easily be missed. “We have seen *the Lord*” John uses this title throughout the Gospel sparingly. It was very much a post-Resurrection title. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead had proved his life and ministry – here indeed, in him is found the fullness of God made flesh – Jesus, the Lord. Upon Thomas’ confession Jesus provides a beatitude; “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”.

Psalm 16 *Conserva me, Domine* Grail Psalter

℟️ Preserve me, Lord, I take refuge in you.

1 Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.

2 I say to the Lord: “You are my God.

My happiness lies in you alone.” ℟️

3 He has put into my heart a marvelous love
for the faithful ones who dwell in his land.

4 Those who choose other gods increase their sorrows.

Never will I offer their offerings of blood.

Never will I take their name upon my lips. ℟️

5 O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;

it is you yourself who are my prize.

6 The lot marked out for me is my delight:

welcome indeed the heritage that falls to me! ℟️

7 I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.

8 I keep the Lord ever in my sight:

since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. ℟️

9 And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my body shall rest in safety.

10 For you will not leave my soul among the dead,
nor let your beloved know decay. **℟**

℟ Preserve me, Lord, I take refuge in you.

11 You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever. **℟**

**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: As it stands in isolation, this prayerful meditation reflects on the blessings of fellowship with God. Like others of similar type (Psalms 4, 11, 23, 62, 131), it expresses supreme trust that apart from God there can be no good. The only real security lies in following the path God shows to the faithful. Thus one can see why both rabbinic and Christian interpreters found this psalm expressive of the quality of trust the true Messiah would exhibit and provide for the faithful believer. It is considered by Christians as a Messianic Psalm because of verse 10 - translated in the King James Bible version as "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." and points to the Resurrection, and our Lord's descent to Hell or the shadowy world of the spirits to preach to them - this is reflected in the Apostle's Creed (said at Morning and Evening Prayer); "He descended into Hell".

Short Preface

But chiefly are we bound to praise you because you raised him gloriously from the dead. For he is the true paschal lamb who was offered for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has restored to us everlasting life.

Post Communion

Lord God our Father, through our Saviour Jesus Christ you have assured your children of eternal life and in baptism have made us one with him: deliver us from the death of sin and raise us to new life in your love, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Blessing

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**