

Sunday 25th February 2018

The Second Sunday of Lent

Purple



Collect

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Romans 4:13-25 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Promise Realized Through Faith

4¹³ For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. ¹⁶ That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸ In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” ¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness^[a] of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²² That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” ²³ But the words “it was counted to him” were not

written for his sake alone, ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, ²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Footnote: a. Greek *deadness*.

COMMENT: Paul had a difficult task in writing to the Roman Christian community. They were unknown to him. He may have met some of them in his travels, but by and large he did not know them personally. He did know, however, that like so many other communities of faith he had founded in Asia Minor and Greece, they were a mixed group of Jews and Gentiles drawn from many different backgrounds with very little in common. He also carried with him the weight of his own background. A Jew of the Diaspora, he had sensitivity toward Greek-speaking Gentiles. As a thoroughly trained rabbi of the Pharisees, he knew the Torah intimately as well. Then too, his mind and heart had been profoundly transformed by his conversion to Christ and his many years as a missionary apostle since that tumultuous experience on the Damascus Road. Paul's argument here was that God's promise to Abraham had special meaning for Christians. As for the patriarch, faith in God, not keeping the law, made the promise effective for them. Faith works in the same way for us. Our being given a right relationship with God (Paul calls it 'justification') depends on our faith in what God has done in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and not on any good behaviour of our own.

Mark 8:31-38 English Standard Version (ESV)

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

8³¹ And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." ³⁴ And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever would save his life^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶ For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and

forfeit his soul? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

Footnotes: a. The same Greek word can mean either *soul* or *life*, depending on the context; twice in this verse and once in verse 36 and once in verse 37

COMMENT: Jesus taught his disciples about his impending death, but Peter rebuked him. He still did not understand the kind of Messiah Jesus had chosen to be. His participation in human life was to be total, to the point of death. Mark’s narrative goes on to quote Jesus instructing not only the disciples but the crowd as well about the cost of discipleship. They must follow him all the way to the cross and beyond. By so saying, Jesus made it clear that he was a different kind of Saviour that his fellow Jews expected. Israel did not have any concept of a suffering Messiah, although Christians adapted the prophecy of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 for this purpose.

Psalm 22: 24-32 *Deus, Deus meus* Grail Psalter

℟ This is the time of repentance for us to atone for our sins and seek salvation.

²⁴ “You who fear the Lord give him praise;
all sons of Jacob, give him glory.
Revere him, Israel's sons. ℟

²⁵ For he has never despised
nor scorned the poverty of the poor.
From him he has not hidden his face,
but he heard the poor man when he cried.” ℟

²⁶ You are my praise in the great assembly.
My vows I will pay before those who fear him.

²⁷ The poor shall eat and shall have their fill.
They shall praise the Lord, those who seek him.
May their hearts live for ever and ever! ℟

²⁸ All the earth shall remember and return to the Lord,
all families of the nations worship before him;
²⁹ for the kingdom is the Lord's, he is ruler of the nations.
³⁰ They shall worship him, all the mighty of the earth;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust.

℟ This is the time of repentance for us to atone for our sins and seek salvation.

And my soul shall live for him, ³¹ my children serve him.
They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come,
³² declare his faithfulness to peoples yet unborn:
“These things the Lord has done.”

**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: There is a possibility that this second half of the psalm is actually a separate hymn of praise and thanksgiving unrelated to the lament of the first part. It may also have served as a liturgy for anyone who came to give thanks for deliverance from affliction.

Short Preface

And now we give you thanks because you give us the spirit of discipline, that we may triumph over evil and grow in grace, as we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed.

Post Communion

Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**