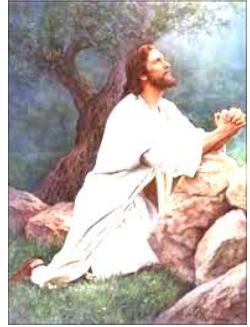


Sunday 13th May 2018

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 1:15-17, 21-26 English Standard Version (ESV)

1¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about one hundred and twenty) and said,¹⁶ “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.¹⁷ For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.

²¹ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”²³ And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias.²⁴ And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen²⁵ to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”²⁶ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

COMMENT: This passage tells us of the first company of believers appointing a successor to Judas Iscariot. The twelve apostles stood symbolically for the twelve tribes. Their task was to lead the early

Church in the task of proclaiming salvation through Jesus Christ until his return. The choice fell to Matthias who was probably one of the seventy-two who had been commissioned by our Lord (Luke 10:1), and who had been a witness to the resurrection. These were the two qualifications for being an apostle in the early church – although not a follower during our Lord’s earthly ministry, Paul was commissioned by the risen Jesus, and so qualified as an Apostle (Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9:1; “Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord?”).

John 17:6-19 English Standard Version (ESV)

17 ⁶ “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. ⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.^[a] ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them^[b] in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself,^[c] that they also may be sanctified^[d] in truth.

Footnotes: a. John 17:15 or *from evil*. b. John 17:17 Greek *Set them apart* (for holy service to God). c. John 17:19 Or *I sanctify myself*; or *I set myself apart* (for holy service to God). d. John 17:19 Greek *may be set apart* (for holy service to God)

COMMENT: Known to many as “the high priestly prayer,” and whilst we can never know that these were the actual words of Jesus, John will have noted what Jesus prayed and sought to convey that in his noting down of that prayer said just before they entered the garden of Gethsemane (so named in Mark 14:32). It is a prayer for us as well as we live in a world still not rushing to hear of God’s saving love. Because he will no longer be with them, the work that Jesus had begun, would rest entirely upon the disciples. The whole world was not immediately in Jesus’ mind, only the few he had gathered about him during his earthly ministry (verse 9). Everything depended on their faithfulness. There is an ancient legend that when Jesus arrived in heaven the angel Gabriel asked what plans he had made for his work to continue. He replied that he had left it all in the hands of the disciples. “And if they fail?” asked Gabriel. And Jesus said, “I have no other plans” – or as we would say today – “there is no plan B” – it is down to us, who are today’s disciples of Christ.

Psalm 1:1-4,6 *Beatus vir qui non abiit* Grail Psalter

℟ Those who prove victorious I will feed from the tree of life.

¹ Happy indeed is the man
who follows not the counsel of the wicked;
nor lingers in the way of sinners
nor sits in the company of scorners,
² but whose delight is the law of the Lord
and who ponders his law day and night. ℟

³ He is like a tree that is planted
beside the flowing waters,
that yields its fruit in due season
and whose leaves shall never fade;
and all that he does shall prosper. ℟

⁴ Not so are the wicked, not so!
For they like winnowed chaff
shall be driven away by the wind.
⁶ for the Lord guards the way of the just
but the way of the wicked leads to doom. ℟

**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 the prologue to the whole Psalter, this psalm describes the kind of person who will benefit most from all the hymns of praise, petition and lament that follow. It may have been written intentionally or adapted for this purpose from another source when the many disparate songs of Israel were being collected into one volume.

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.**