

Sunday 8th July 2018

Trinity 6

Proper 9 **Green**



Collect

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; 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**

2 Corinthians 12:2-10 English Standard Version

Paul's Visions and His Thorn

12² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows.³ And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—⁴ and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.⁵ On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses.⁶ Though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me.⁷ So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations,^[a] a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Footnotes: a. *or hears from me, even because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations. So to keep me from becoming conceited*

COMMENT: In the midst of a conflict with the Corinthian Christian community, Paul tells about two of his deepest spiritual experiences. In one he had an ecstatic theophany when he received an exceptional revelation. He does not say exactly what the revelation was. Perhaps it was beyond words, as such experiences can be, but it was one which added to his certainty of the love of God in Christ. In the other spiritual experience described in this passage, Paul tells how he fervently

prayed to have the unidentified cause of great suffering removed. Instead he was given the reassurance that God's grace would be sufficient for his every need. Much speculation has been expended as to the exact nature of Paul's problem. These vary from a painful and incurable disease, a physical disability due to paralysis, a facial disfigurement or poor eyesight. The fact is that we can never know for sure. More important, however, is the way he deals with his "thorn in the flesh." It became a source of power in that it made possible a deeper spiritual experience enabling him to withstand ever greater hardship in pursuing his mission as an evangelist.

Mark 6:1-13 English Standard Version (ESV)

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

6¹ He went away from there and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. ² And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands?" ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offence at him. ⁴ And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour, except in his home town and among his relatives and in his own household." ⁵ And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶ And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles

⁷ And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸ He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— ⁹ but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. ¹⁰ And he said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. ¹¹ And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." ¹² So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. ¹³ And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

Footnotes: a. Greek *chiton*, a long garment worn under the cloak next to the skin

COMMENT: Those of Jesus' hometown felt uneasy with him in their midst, especially when he taught in their synagogue on a sabbath. We are not told why they were so offended. Perhaps it was just their jealousy that one whom they knew so well had become so famous. Certainly they thought he had far gone beyond what one of his status as a humble carpenter should go. They would have had respect for him as one skilled in such trades as carpentry that contributed to the general welfare of the community. But they would not have expected him to be skilled in the interpretation of the scriptures or to have any divine insight. Not discouraged Jesus then sent out those he had been teaching, with the basic rules for

mission work – relying on God. Rather than this strategy being foolhardy, it is one with known results. These rules were later taken up by St Francis of Assisi, who in 1202, through a vision at first embraced poverty. It was this very message from today's Gospel (as related in Matthew 10) that inspired Francis to copy this method, and in so doing he gained followers, which then began the Franciscan Order, which was officially endorsed by the Pope Innocent III, in 1210.

Psalm 48 *Magnus Dominus* Grail Psalter

℟ God upholds his city forever.

¹ *A Song. A Psalm. Of the sons of Korah.*

² The Lord is great and worthy to be praised
in the city of our God.

³ His holy mountain rises in beauty,
the joy of all the earth. **℟**

Mount Zion, true pole of the earth,
the Great King's city!

⁴ God, in the midst of its citadels,
has shown himself its stronghold. **℟**

⁵ For the kings assembled together,
together they advanced.

⁶ They saw; at once they were astounded;
dismayed, they fled in fear. **℟**

⁷ A trembling seized them there,
like the pangs of birth.

⁸ By the east wind you have destroyed
the ships of Tarshish. **℟**

⁹ As we have heard, so we have seen
in the city of our God,
in the city of the Lord of hosts
which God upholds for ever. **℟**

¹⁰ O God, we ponder your love
within your temple.

¹¹ Your praise, O God, like your name
reaches the ends of the earth. **℟**

With justice your right hand is filled.

¹² Mount Zion rejoices;
the people of Judah rejoice
at the sight of your judgments. **℟**

¹³ Walk through Zion, walk all round it;
count the number of its towers.

¹⁴ Review all its ramparts,
examine its castles,

✠ God upholds his city forever.

that you may tell the next generation

¹⁵ that such is our God,
our God for ever and always.

It is he who leads us. **✠**

**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: In the century after their return from exile in Babylon in 539 BC, the Jews sought to recover their national identity by rebuilding their temple and their capital city of Jerusalem. The monarchy had ceased to exist, but the temple priesthood replaced royalty as the most prominent leaders of the people. Out of this restored religious culture arose a fundamentally theocratic system which flowered in the elaboration of the cultus of temple sacrifices, the creation of psalmody and other religious literature which subsequently became the canon of scripture. This highly nationalistic psalm praising Jerusalem as the holy city of The LORD is part of that renaissance. It may well have been sung by pilgrims who came to Jerusalem for the sacred festivals. Many Jews, especially those of the Diaspora, could only afford to make this pilgrimage once in a lifetime. Every stone and handful of dust from the city would be sacred to them. The theme of this psalm is the Lord's protection for the city itself. It is "his holy mountain" (verse 2). The second part of that parallelism likens Mount Zion to a mountain in the far north, possibly Mount Hermon, which reaches to heaven. There follows a recalling of history in verses 4-8. Israel had suffered from many foreign invasions. Her enemies had all perished but Jerusalem had remained. Worshiping in the temple, strolling through the streets, or marvelling at the city's fortification brings to mind why this Jerusalem is so secure: The Lord loves Israel. There can be only one response to this insight: praise for Israel's protector.

Post Communion

God of our pilgrimage, you have led us to the living water: refresh and sustain us as we go forward on our journey, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**