

Sunday 5th August 2018

Trinity 10

Proper 13 **Green**



Collect

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same; 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 Samuel 11:1-12:14 English Standard Version (ESV)

David and Bathsheba

11 ²⁶When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband. ²⁷And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

Nathan Rebukes David

12 ¹And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, “There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. ²The rich man had very many flocks and herds, ³but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, ^[a]and it was like a daughter to him. ⁴Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man’s lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.” ⁵Then David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, ⁶and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.” ⁷Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. ⁸And I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. ⁹Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house,

because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’¹¹ Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.¹² For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.’”¹³ David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die”.

Footnotes: a. Hebrew *bosom*; also verse 8.

COMMENT: The confrontation between David and Nathan, the prophet, brings to the fore the magnitude of David’s sin with Bathsheba, then arranging for her husband’s death in battle to cover up what he had done. The story is one of the most powerful in the whole sequence of hero-legends about Israel’s greatest king. It makes the point, however, that even the greatest should not misuse God-given authority and power for selfish ends. One powerful message which allows hope even for the greatest sinner, is that God has forgiven David who committed adultery and then sought to cover it up with murder. One is just struck with the humbling effect of forgiveness following the words of contrite confession “I have sinned against the LORD”.

John 6:24-35 English Standard Version (ESV)

6²⁴ So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?”²⁶ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.²⁷ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”²⁸ Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?”²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”³⁰ So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?”³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”³² Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”³⁴ They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst”.

COMMENT: This passage makes a number of significant points: The miracle was another of the signs identifying Jesus as the Messiah/Christ, the Son of God. Whilst in verse 27, ‘son of man’ can refer to any son of Adam - in other words a man, Jesus as ‘The Son of Man’, is the “Last Man” as Adam is the first man. He is here to redeem all mankind. Jesus also bears the “seal” which the Father has set on

him. The Greek verb *spraigizein* used in this instance occurs also in 3:33. In both cases the verb refers to the well-known custom of stamping one's personal signet on wax sealing a document, product or vessel to validate its ownership and authenticity. Here it symbolised trustworthiness, i.e. Jesus is the one person who can give eternal, spiritual life because God has set his seal upon him. The passage points beyond Jesus to God who is the source of all life. The miracles Jesus performs are "the works of God" recalling the "mighty acts" of the Old Testament. Believing in Jesus, the Christ, is the only essential divine work because God alone is the source of all life and power including Jesus' power to perform the miracle of feeding the multitude. The manna the Israelites ate in the desert came not from Moses but from God. Then John has Jesus' interlocutors ask reverently for this "bread from heaven" which opens the way for Jesus to launch into his discourse, "I am the bread of life." Finally, by placing particular emphasis on this statement, John identifies Jesus completely with God. This is a more spiritual and theological reflection on the both the miracle and the person of Christ than one finds in the other Gospels. It comes close to defining the Trinitarian view of the person and work Christ. Yet John still maintains the Hebrew sense of spiritual life in the context of daily existence in the world where bread is eaten for physical sustenance. Yet, it also looks beyond the materialistic element of a few loaves and fish to the divine, spiritual source of life itself. The purpose of eating the bread of life (i.e. believing in Jesus Christ) is to live spiritually in the world here and now while waiting for the eschaton yet to come.

Psalm 51: 1-14 *Miserere mei, Deus* Grail Psalter

℟ Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.

¹ *For the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David*

² *when the prophet Nathan came to him after he had gone to Bethsheba.*

³ Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.

In your compassion blot out my offence.

⁴ O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin. **℟**

⁵ My offences truly I know them;
my sin is always before me

⁶ Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done. **℟**

That you may be justified when you give sentence
and be without reproach when you judge,

⁷ O see, in guilt I was born,
a sinner was I conceived. **℟**

⁸ Indeed you love truth in the heart;
then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.

⁹ O purify me, then I shall be clean;
O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow. **℟**

¹⁰ Make me hear rejoicing and gladness,
that the bones you have crushed may thrill.

¹¹ From my sins turn away your face
and blot out all my guilt.

℟ Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.

¹² A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.

¹³ Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit. ℟

¹⁴ R me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervour sustain me. ℟

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: Because of the superscription many assume that this psalm refers directly to David's sin. Psalm titles were added much later by scribes seeking to relate as many of them to David's life on the assumption that he was author of many of the psalms. This may not be the case. Seventy-three psalms bear titles referring David in one way or another. Some of them related to specific incidents in his life, as does this one. Yet this Psalm is a very beautiful prayer of repentance by an individual who is both deathly ill and very conscious of his personal transgressions. More significant, perhaps, is the fact that there are no attempts to blame anyone but himself for the fate that has befallen him. The whole psalm presents a personal confession as poignant as any in all of scripture.

Post Communion

Lord God, whose Son is the true vine and the source of life, ever giving himself that the world may live: may we so receive within ourselves the power of his death and passion that, in his saving cup, we may share his glory and be made perfect in his love; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

The 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.**