

Sunday 12th August 2018

Trinity 11

Proper 14 **Green**



Collect

O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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**

Ephesians 4:25-5:2 English Standard Version (ESV)

4 ²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labour, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Walk in Love

5 ¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

COMMENT: It is probable that one of Paul's disciples composed this letter from his knowledge of Paul's teaching, possibly after using it as a baptismal sermon. In this brief excerpt he exhorted his audience to live in a gentle and kindly way rather than angrily venting their frustrations and complaining about injustices they may have suffered. Their model was to be God's loving forgiveness for them so fully expressed in Jesus Christ

who died for them. The Pauline letters were written for real situations within the early faith communities. We have few resources to decipher exactly what those circumstances may have been when these letters were composed. It would appear from the context of this passage that there was a considerable amount of bickering and quarrelling going on in this congregation. Either that, or the letter was addressed to faith communities in general who were in great conflict over the issue of whether Jews and Gentile could fellowship together. Apparently anger and deceit within the fellowship had become serious concerns. People also seem to have been taking advantage of one another. Some may have been only partially reformed thieves (verse 28). When people are riled up about issues, they often criticise and condemn one another mercilessly. That may be what the author had in mind about “evil talk” in verse 29. His antidote to that kind of talk is worth noting. Did the anonymous author also have in mind Paul’s “fruits of the Spirit” in verse 30? He certainly made direct reference to the Spirit as the seal of our future redemption, a phrase that occurs in the Pauline corpus many times. Then he returned to his earlier concern about serious communication issues that had arisen within the church for which there was only one solution: to speak in kindly, gentle words with gracious forgiveness modelled on God’s forgiving grace in Jesus Christ. That, of course, would require considerable change of heart and perhaps some personal sacrifice of pride, especially for those who had been hurt by harshly spoken words. As a preacher once noted; “Only those who have been hurt can be forgiving because they have been wounded and violated.” That is exactly what God did – and does – continually and consistently.

John 6:35, 41-51. English Standard Version (ESV)

6³⁵ 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.

⁴¹ So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴² They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” ⁴³ Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— ⁴⁶ not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this

bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

COMMENT: So different from the other gospels, John adds this discourse to the story of Jesus feeding of the five thousand. It is filled with John’s reflections on who Jesus really is and the meaning of his being the bread of life. Jesus’ claim to be the complete revelation of God puzzled his Jewish contemporaries. They protested that they knew full well who he was because they knew his parents. Jesus went on to explain that he was not only the successor to the prophets, but the one who makes perfectly plain all that can be known about God and gives eternal, spiritual life to all who believed. John’s Gospel was written possibly as long as sixty years after the resurrection for the third generation of Christians. He gave the early church’s most profound understanding of what Jesus really means to every generation.

Psalm 130 *De profundis* Grail Psalter

℟ With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

¹ *A Song of Ascents.*

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,

² Lord, hear my voice!

O let your ears be attentive

to the voice of my pleading. ℟

³ If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,

Lord, who would survive?

⁴ But with you is found forgiveness:

for this we revere you. ℟

⁵ My soul is waiting for the Lord.

I count on his word.

⁶ My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak.

(Let the watchman count on daybreak

⁷ and Israel on the Lord.) ℟

Because with the Lord there is mercy

and fullness of redemption,

⁸ Israel indeed he will redeem

from all its iniquity. ℟

**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: As a prayer of penitence this psalm has few equals. It reflects of an actual situation evoking a desperate cry for God's forgiveness. The need to be reconciled to God has universal application in the patient hope with which the psalm ends.

Post Communion

Lord of all mercy, we your faithful people have celebrated that one true sacrifice which takes away our sins and brings pardon and peace: by our communion keep us firm on the foundation of the gospel and preserve us from all sin; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, establish, strengthen and settle you in the faith; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**