

Sunday 19th August 2018

Trinity 12

Proper 15 **Green**

*I am
the Bread
of Life*

John 6:35



Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray and to give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of 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**

1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Death of David

2 ¹⁰ Then David slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David. ¹¹ And the time that David reigned over Israel was forty years. He reigned seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. 12 So Solomon sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established.

Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom

3 ³ Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father, only he sacrificed and made offerings at the high places. ⁴ And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵ At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." ⁶ And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. ⁷ And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. ⁹ Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your

great people?”¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this.¹¹ And God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right,¹² behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.¹³ I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honour, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days.¹⁴ And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”

COMMENT: The books of Samuel and Kings were originally a single volume, it was not until the translation of the Greek OT, the Septuagint, in the 3rd century BC, that they came to be regarded as four books of “Kingdoms.” Jerome’s 5th Century Latin translation, The Vulgate, followed the same principle and called them “the four books of Kings. They constitute the history of Israel’s monarchy from the false start with Saul to its end in the Babylonian captivity in 587/6 BC. The sources for this compilation appear to have been a collection of chronicles or annals, some perhaps as early as the reigns of David and Solomon. There were also many oral legends about dominant leaders that had been passed down from generation to generation. This passage deals with the beginning of Solomon’s reign (circa 962-922 BC). When Solomon succeeded David as king of Israel, he prayed for the wisdom he needed to rule over God’s chosen people. The story reflects an attitude toward Solomon probably contained in a laudatory biography. The message of the passage clear: This is the way of the Lord; follow it and you will prosper.

John 6:51-58 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Bread of Life

6⁵¹ 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.”⁵² The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”⁵³ So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.⁵⁴ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.⁵⁵ For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.⁵⁶ Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.⁵⁷ As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread^[a] the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”

Footnote: a. Greek lacks *the bread*.

COMMENT: The controversy with the Jews continued as they protested Jesus' claim that they eat his flesh and drink his blood to gain eternal life. John told the story as an eyewitness. From his narrative, one can see the Jews arguing among themselves (verse 52). Jesus stood aside from the fray letting them have their dispute. By saying that Jesus' flesh and blood are true food and drink, John echoed the frequent and by then formalised sacramental remembrance of the death and resurrection of Christ and his continuing presence in the church. This long discourse not only revealed how opposition to Jesus developed during his ministry in Galilee, but also showed that he challenged their traditional ways of thinking about how God is revealed. When John composed his gospel, the church had recognised both its continuity and discontinuity with the Jewish tradition. However, strange that may seem to us, John was telling his audience that Jesus had given himself as a sacrifice for all. His body broken and his blood shed on the cross were now represented in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. He was not only with them, he was in them. Because they had shared in this feast of his body and blood at which he was the host, they would be with him, they in him and he in them eternally.

Psalm 111 *Confitebor tibi* Grail Psalter

℟ The Lord keeps his covenant ever in mind.

¹ Alleluia!

I will thank the Lord with all my heart
in the meeting of the just and their assembly.

² Great are the works of the Lord,
to be pondered by all who love them. **℟**

³ Majestic and glorious his work,
his justice stands firm for ever.

⁴ He makes us remember his wonders.
The Lord is compassion and love. **℟**

⁵ He gives food to those who fear him;
keeps his covenant ever in mind.

⁶ He has shown his might to his people
by giving them the lands of the nations. **℟**

⁷ His works are justice and truth,
his precepts are all of them sure,

⁸ standing firm for ever and ever;
they are made in uprightness and truth. **℟**

⁹ He has sent deliverance to his people
and established his covenant for ever.
Holy his name, to be feared. **℟**

¹⁰ To fear the Lord is the first stage of wisdom;
all who do so prove themselves wise.
His praise shall last for ever!

✠ The Lord keeps his covenant ever in mind.

**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: This classic psalm praises the works and wisdom of God. Words such as precepts, wisdom and understanding represent the point of view of the authors of wisdom literature such as Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. In particular, the chief identifier of this type of poetry is the phrase “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (verse 10). The acrostic form of this psalm in Hebrew also exhibits another characteristic of wisdom psalms. Several other psalms adopt this same form. Scholars attribute them all to a school of pious Jews concerned about the decline of their traditions in the late Persian and early Greek periods (5th – 4th century BC) long after the return from exile in Babylon (539 BC). The content of the psalm uses this artificiality extremely well to celebrate the goodness of the LORD to Israel. It has a liturgical quality which points to its creation for use in public worship. Verse 1 states as much. Despite the limitations of the acrostic form, it still praises the LORD as the one who has so richly blessed Israel. It briefly recalls the “mighty works” of Israel’s faith-history (verses 2-4) recounted throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. The providence of the LORD for Israel in fulfillment of the covenant comes to the fore in verses 5-9. Because the LORD has been faithful and just throughout history, “his precepts are trustworthy” (verse 7). Indeed, they are eternal and requiring a faithful response from everyone (verse 8). Redemption rests on this premise (verse 9).

Post Communion

God of all mercy, in this Eucharist you have set aside our sins and given us your healing: grant that we who are made whole in Christ may bring that healing to this broken world, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
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.**