

Sunday 16th September 2018

Trinity 16

Proper 19 **Green**



Collect

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers of your people who call upon you; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; 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**

James 3:1-12 English Standard Version (ESV)

Taming the Tongue

3¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ² For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. ³ If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. ⁴ Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵ So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life,^[a] and set on fire by hell.^[b] ⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers,^[c] these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

Footnotes: a. or *wheel of birth*. b. Greek *Gehenna*. c. or *brothers and sisters*; also verse 12.

COMMENT: The passage consists of a series of lively metaphors for a careless tongue and how it may be controlled to everyone's benefit. The metaphors are quite obvious and still familiar to modern readers: a bit in a horse's mouth, a ship's rudder, a forest fire, the taming of wild animals and birds, a spring of water, olive

trees and grapevines. There can be no doubt about what James meant in castigating those to whom he spoke directly or indirectly. His purpose was to create disciples who lived what they professed to believe.

Mark 8:27-38 English Standard Version (ESV)

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

8 ²⁷ And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” ²⁸ And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹ And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” ³⁰ And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

³¹ And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.” ³⁴ And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever would save his life ^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶ For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

Footnotes: a. The same Greek word can mean either *soul* or *life*, depending on the context; twice in this verse and once in verse 36 and once in verse 37.

COMMENT: Jesus revealed his Messiahship to his disciples on foreign territory. Caesarea Philippi, at one of three sources of the Jordan River, was a vacation spa built by Philip the Tetrarch, son of Herod the Great, and dedicated to Tiberius Caesar and himself. It was situated on a beautiful terrace about 1150 feet above sea level on the southwest slope of Mount Hermon overlooking the Jordan valley. In Jesus' time oppressive summer heat drove any Galilean who could afford it to such retreats as this royal spa. It must have been of considerable significance to the early Church that this should be the place where Jesus revealed his full identity to the disciples. The fundamental apostolic creed proclaimed, “Jesus is Lord,” not Caesar or his puppet king, Philip, the remaining inheritor of the Herod dynasty. This was the fundamental issue for the Christians in Rome in the years following Nero's burning of the city, his persecution of the Christians as the perpetrator of the crime, and the triumphal return of Titus from the sacking of Jerusalem bearing the golden candelabra and other booty from the ruined Second Temple. The idea of a crucified Messiah is central to this passage. Jesus rebuked Peter when he tried to

dissuade him from such a course. For Jesus, this was yet another temptation in the guise of a close friend's counsel. It tested his commitment to the mission he had chosen as a result of his earlier temptations, which began his ministry. To impress the seriousness of his mission, Jesus turned to the wider audience of the crowd gathered with his disciples, and invited all to deny themselves and take up the cross - which may be a very real cross involving suffering - not a life of comfort to which it is so easily to aspire!

Psalm 19 *Caeli enarrant* Grail Psalter

℟ **Blessed are you, Lord, in the vault of heaven.**

¹ *For the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David*

² The heavens proclaim the glory of God,
and the firmament shows forth the work of his hands.

³ Day unto day takes up the story
and night unto night makes known the message. ℟

⁴ No speech, no word, no voice is heard
⁵ yet their span extends through all the earth,
their words to the utmost bounds of the world. ℟

There he has placed a tent for the sun;
⁶ it comes forth like a bridegroom coming from his tent,
rejoices like a champion to run its course. ℟

⁷ At the end of the sky is the rising of the sun;
to the furthest end of the sky is its course.
There is nothing concealed from its burning heat. ℟

⁸ The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.
The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,
it gives wisdom to the simple. ℟

⁹ The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.
The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes. ℟

¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding for ever.
The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just. ℟

¹¹ They are more to be desired than gold,
than the purest of gold
and sweeter are they than honey,
than honey from the comb. ℟

¹² So in them your servant finds instruction;
great reward is in their keeping.

¹³ But who can detect all his errors?

From hidden faults acquit me.

✠ Blessed are you, Lord, in the vault of heaven.

¹⁴ From presumption restrain your servant
and let it not rule me.

Then shall I be blameless,

clean from grave sin. **✠**

¹⁵ May the spoken words of my mouth,
the thoughts of my heart,
win favour in your sight, O Lord,
my rescuer, my rock!

**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: No greater evidence of the glory of God exists, says this psalmist, than the majestic order of creation and the orderliness of God's law. It is also possible that we have here two psalms woven together in verses 2-7 and 8-15. This psalm sees all of creation as giving glory to the true one God, who made all. The cosmology of the poem represents the natural observations of the sun. We still speak of the sun rising the east and setting in the west. In reality the earth revolves on its axis, turning the planet away from the sun thus creating the illusion of the sun rising and setting. This perception still has romantic and poetic value in the literature and folk wisdom of many cultures - even to our own time. The first part of the psalm declares the Glory of God, but the psalm then moves to the Law given by God - God's glory is revealed in what we see, and his Law is that by which we should live, and thereby reap great reward (verse 11).

Post Communion

Almighty God, you have taught us through your Son that love is the fulfilling of the law: grant that we may love you with our whole heart and our neighbours as ourselves; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Blessing

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**