

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018

## Trinity 18

Proper 21 **Green**



### Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us your gift of faith that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy; 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 5:13-20** English Standard Version (ESV)

### The Prayer of Faith

5 <sup>13</sup>Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. <sup>14</sup>Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup>And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup>Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>17</sup>Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. <sup>18</sup>Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. <sup>19</sup>My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, <sup>20</sup>let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

### Footnotes:

a. or *The effective prayer of a righteous person has great power*

**COMMENT:** In an age when scientific medicine was still very primitive, healing the sick had spiritual as well as physical significance, as it still has for many and for the Church. Anointing the sick with oil and prayer were seen as valid treatment. Repentance, confession and seeking forgiveness were also a very important part of the healing process. Note that the treatment James prescribed was perceived as God’s action, not that of the church elders.

## **Mark 9:38-50** English Standard Version (ESV)

### **Anyone Not Against Us Is for Us**

9<sup>38</sup> John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name,<sup>[a]</sup> and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.”<sup>39</sup> But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.<sup>40</sup> For the one who is not against us is for us.<sup>41</sup> For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

### **Temptations to Sin**

42 “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin,<sup>[b]</sup> it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.<sup>43</sup> And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell,<sup>[c]</sup> to the unquenchable fire.<sup>[d]</sup><sup>45</sup> And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell.<sup>47</sup> And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell,<sup>48</sup> ‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’<sup>49</sup> For everyone will be salted with fire.<sup>[e]</sup><sup>50</sup> Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

**Footnotes:** a. Some manuscripts add *who does not follow us*. b. Greek *to stumble*; also verses 43, 45, 47. c. Greek *Gehenna*; also verse 47. d. Some manuscripts add verses 44 and 46 (which are identical with verse 48). e. Some manuscripts add *and every sacrifice will be salted with salt*.

**COMMENT:** The issue in this passage still troubles many: Who really is a follower of Jesus? In response to this dilemma posed by John, the son of Zebedee, Jesus appears to broaden the scope of discipleship: “Whoever is not against us is for us.” At the same time, there is a severity in Jesus’ words spoken in crisp metaphors. Preventing others from following Jesus in even the simplest of ways can be virtually unpardonable sin.

**Psalm 124** *Nisi qua Dominus* Grail Psalter

**℟ Our help is in the name of the Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> *A Song of Ascents. Of David.*

“If the Lord had not been on our side,”  
this is Israel’s song.

<sup>2</sup> “If the Lord had not been on our side  
when men rose up against us,

<sup>3</sup> then would they have swallowed us alive  
when their anger was kindled. **℟**

<sup>4</sup> Then would the waters have engulfed us,  
the torrent gone over us;

<sup>5</sup> over our head would have swept  
the raging waters.” **℟**

<sup>6</sup> Blessed be the Lord who did not give us  
a prey to their teeth!

<sup>7</sup> Our life, like a bird, has escaped  
from the snare of the fowler. **℟**

Indeed the snare has been broken  
and we have escaped.

<sup>8</sup> Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth. **℟**

**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:** Yet another of the so-called “Songs of Ascent” believed to have been sung by pilgrims approaching Jerusalem. It thanks God for deliverance from the assaults of some unknown enemy, possibly during a period of political instability and civil strife.

### **Post Communion**

We praise and thank you, O Christ, for this sacred feast: for here we receive you, here the memory of your passion is renewed, here our minds are filled with grace, and here a pledge of future glory is given, when we shall feast at that table where you reign with all your saints 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.**