

30th June 2019

Trinity 2

Green Proper 8



Collect

Lord, you have taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth: send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the true bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you. Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

1 Kings 19.15-16,19-21 English Standard Version (ESV)

The LORD Speaks to Elijah

19¹⁵ And the LORD said to Elijah, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ¹⁶ And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place.

The Call of Elisha

¹⁹ So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. ²⁰ And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" ²¹ And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

COMMENT: Soundly rebuked by the LORD for deserting his post under the strain of persecution, Elijah received new orders for his ministry as Israel's leading prophet. The LORD directed him to return to Israel to anoint a new king for Israel and for their northern neighbours, the Arameans, (inhabiting modern Syria with its capital at Damascus). As if to underline his failure, Elijah also received orders to anoint a new prophet, Elisha, to take his own place as spiritual leader of the nation. Unless one regards verses 17-18 as an interpolation into the narrative, there seems little reason to omit them

from the reading. In fact, they provide a reasonable assurance that Israel has not been completely apostate as Elijah had complained in his own pathetic defense (verse 14). Having done as directed, Elijah threw his mantle over Elisha who immediately ran after the prophet signifying his acceptance of his new role. Elijah hesitated about what he had done, but then relented when Elisha wished to return to say farewell to his parents. Slaughtering the oxen, Elisha used their equipment to prepare a sacrificial feast before leaving his family to follow as Elijah's servant. The story gives us insight into ancient prophetic succession. An oddity in this narrative is the anointing of Elisha when the normal practice was to anoint only monarchs. The cycle of stories about Elijah does not end here as might be expected, but there is an unmistakable break in the narrative between this episode and the next. Scholars believe that the two cycles probably come from different sources at different periods in the 8th century BC as well as being adapted by the Jewish editors after the exile in Babylon (586-539 BC).

Luke 9:51-62 English Standard Version (ESV)

A Samaritan Village Rejects Jesus

9⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.⁵² And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him.⁵³ But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.⁵⁴ And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"^[a]⁵⁵ But he turned and rebuked them.^[b]⁵⁶ And they went on to another village.

The Cost of Following Jesus

⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."⁵⁹ To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."⁶⁰ And Jesus^[c] said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."⁶¹ Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home."⁶² Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Footnotes: a. some manuscripts add *as Elijah did*. b. some manuscripts add *and he said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of; for the Son of Man came not to destroy people's lives but to save them"*. c. Greek *he*.

COMMENT: Already bound for Jerusalem and the cross, Jesus decided to take the mountain route through Samaria rather than usual route to the east down the Jordan valley. As with many political and ethnic rivalries still, this enmity took on religious overtones. By Jesus' time, this hostility had lasted more than 700 years since Israel's ten northern tribes had been conquered by the Assyrians. Two of Jesus' more hot-tempered disciples immediately expressed the traditional view toward the Samaritans who refused them entrance to their village. James and John wanted to call down punishment on these people who rejected their beloved Master. Does this not sound familiar in our day, and illustrate many of the conflicts worldwide?

In the second part of the Gospel reading, in seeking to understand his apparent harshness, Jesus was saying that the demands of God's reign of love presents us with a higher loyalty than that of filial duty or family responsibility. He concludes with a metaphor that has little meaning for most people today. He likens this challenge of discipleship to that of a farmer ploughing a field behind a single beast or a small team. One can only drive a straight furrow by looking forward to the distant goal, a point at the end of the field.

Psalm 16 *Conserva me, Domine* Grail Psalter

℟️ Preserve me, Lord, I take refuge in you.

¹ Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.

² I say to the Lord: "You are my God.

My happiness lies in you alone." **℟️**

³ He has put into my heart a marvellous love
for the faithful ones who dwell in his land.

⁴ Those who choose other gods increase their sorrows.

Never will I offer their offerings of blood.

Never will I take their name upon my lips. **℟️**

⁵ O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.

⁶ The lot marked out for me is my delight:
welcome indeed the heritage that falls to me! **℟️**

⁷ I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.

⁸ I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. **℟️**

⁹ And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my body shall rest in safety.

¹⁰ For you will not leave my soul among the dead,
nor let your beloved know decay.

℟️ Preserve me, Lord, I take refuge in you.

¹¹ You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever. **℟️**

**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: As it stands in isolation, this prayerful meditation reflects on the blessings of fellowship with God. Like others of similar type (Psalms 4, 11, 23, 62, 131), it expresses supreme trust that apart from God there can be no good. The only real security lies in following the path God shows to the faithful. Thus one can see why both rabbinic and Christian interpreters found this psalm expressive of the quality of trust the true Messiah would exhibit and provide for the faithful believer. It is considered by Christians as a Messianic Psalm because of verse 10 - translated in the King James Bible version as "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." and points to the Resurrection, and our Lord's descent to Hell or the shadowy world of the spirits to preach to them - this is reflected in the Apostle's Creed (said at Morning and Evening Prayer); "He descended into Hell".

Post Communion

Loving Father, we thank you for feeding us at the supper of your Son: sustain us with your Spirit, that we may serve you here on earth until our joy is complete in heaven, and we share in the eternal banquet with Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love, defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**