

Sunday 14th July 2019

Trinity 4

Green Proper 10



Collect

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that with you as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not our hold on things eternal; grant this, heavenly Father, for our Lord 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**

Colossians 1:1-14 English Standard Version (ESV)

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ²To the saints and faithful brothers^[a] in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, ⁷just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant.^[b] He is a faithful minister of Christ on your^[c] behalf ⁸and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

⁹And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. ¹¹May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all

endurance and patience with joy,¹² giving thanks^[d] to the Father, who has qualified you^[e] to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Footnotes: a. or *brothers and sisters*. The plural Greek word *adelphoi* (translated “brothers”) refers to siblings in a family. In New Testament usage, depending on the context, *adelphoi* may refer either to men or to both men and women who are siblings (brothers and sisters) in God’s family, the church. b. Greek *fellow bondservant*. c. some manuscripts *our*. d. or *patience, with joy giving thanks*. e. some manuscripts *us*.

COMMENT: Many scholars judge that this letter was not by Paul, but by one of Paul’s close followers. The vocabulary measured against Paul’s other letters differs - even the meaning that the author gives to some word. In these opening words of greeting and thanksgiving, the author applauds the Colossians’ faithfulness to the gospel as his colleague, Epaphras, had instructed them. The dominant feature of their faithfulness is love. Paul’s prayer that they continue their spiritual growth in the face of a severe challenge from “the power of darkness” from which they have been rescued. These words point to a time of conflict scholars believe to have been caused by a serious heresy.

Luke 10:25-37 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

10²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”²⁷ And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.”²⁸ And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?”³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii^[a] and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?’ ³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

Footnote: a. a *denarius* was a day's wage for a labourer.

COMMENT: The parable of neighbourliness, the Good Samaritan, came at a teaching moment when Jesus summarised the Torah in two linked quotations from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. We have no way of knowing what motivated the man to ask Jesus the crucial question “wanting to justify himself,” as Luke tells us (vs. 29). One might well suspect, however, that Luke had had some hurtful experience with a crafty lawyer at some time in the past, hence using this word, and not such as 'scribe'. He used the term “lawyer” six times in his gospel, almost always in a derogatory sense. It occurs twice in Titus, only once in Matthew and nowhere else in the New Testament. Furthermore, Luke did not use it in passages drawn from Mark or Matthew (he probably had both of those Gospel before him, when penning his own). For one steeped in the Jewish law as this man apparently was, no story could have struck a more devastating blow to his pride as a rigidly orthodox Jew. The parable was told to illustrate the point it so manifestly makes. Much loved and as important as it is in understanding Jesus’ inclusive attitude and his ethical mandate for all human relationships, it also exhibits some lively rhetoric and considerable unreality. No knowledgeable priest or Levite, fully aware the dangers, would likely have travelled the road alone. Jesus himself appears to have walked this route in the company of his disciples on his way up from Jericho to Bethany and Jerusalem. There would have been room on the trail, but scarcely more, for a man to lead a donkey. If the Samaritan was on his way home, he was taking a very indirect route. His journey would more likely have taken him straight north from Jerusalem via Bethel, Shiloh and Sycar. He would have gone this way only if he had business in Jericho or east across the Jordan. Again one wonders if the rescuer, his route and his ministry to the wounded victim were so identified to emphasise Jesus’ point about neighbourliness. No Jew would have allowed a Samaritan to assist or comfort him in this way unless he was in extremely helpless circumstances. According to Jewish tradition, the enmity of Jews and Samaritans dated from the 8th century BC. The Assyrian Shalmaneser and his invading army had taken the leading citizens of Israel into exile in 721 BC never to return. Subsequently the remaining Israelites of the Northern Kingdom had intermarried with immigrants transported from their homelands. The Samaritans rejected this view as a vile Jewish canard. They identified Eli, the priest of the sanctuary of Shiloh who mentored Samuel, as the person who had establishing a sanctuary at Shiloh to rival the one established by Moses on Mount Gerazim.

Psalm 82 *Deus stetit*

℟ Arise, O God, to judge the earth.

¹ God stands in the divine assembly.
In the midst of the gods he gives judgment. **℟**

² “How long will you judge unjustly
and favour the cause of the wicked?

³ Do justice for the weak and the orphan,
defend the afflicted and the needy.

⁴ Rescue the weak and the poor;
set them free from the hand of the wicked. **℟**

⁵ Unperceiving, they grope in the darkness
and the order of the world is shaken.

⁶ I have said to you: 'You are gods
and all of you, sons of the Most High.'

⁷ And yet, you shall die like men,
you shall fall like any of the princes.”

℟ Arise, O God, to judge the earth.

⁸ Arise, O God, judge the earth,
for you rule all the nations. **℟**

**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: Many of the psalms show the influence of the outspoken utterances of the prophets. One hears echoes of Amos in this psalm which may have served as a liturgical hymn in the temple in Jerusalem at the New Year to celebrate the absolute sovereignty of God.

Post Communion

Eternal God, comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken, you have fed us at the table of life and hope: teach us the ways of gentleness and peace, that all the world may acknowledge the kingdom of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

God give you grace to follow his saints in faith and hope and love; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**