

Sunday 21st July 2019

Trinity 5

Green Proper 11



Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

Genesis 18:1-10 English Standard Version (ESV)

Isaac's Birth Promised

18 ¹ And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks^[a] of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth ³ and said, "O Lord,^[b] if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, ⁵ while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." ⁶ And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Three seahs^[c] of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes." ⁷ And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. ⁸ Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate. ⁹ They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." ¹⁰ The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him.

Footnotes: a. or *terebinths*. b. or *My lord*. c. a *seah* was about 7 quarts or 7.3 litres.

COMMENT: This odd little story tells of God appearing to Abraham in the guise of three travellers to promise that they would have a son in their later years. Some Christian exegetes (textual students) see in this passage, the Holy Trinity of three persons. The motif of God appearing in the guise of three men has much in common with other ancient religious literature. The three men though, could be agents of the LORD – messengers or ‘Angels’ if you will. Abraham’s hospitality also follows the traditional custom of tribal societies. Such hospitality usually resulted in a blessing. For this reason alone, the story would have been remembered with great favour in the oral tradition preceding its documentation.

Luke 10:38-42 English Standard Version (ESV)

Martha and Mary

10³⁸ Now as they went on their way, Jesus^[a] entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴² but one thing is necessary.^[b] Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

Footnotes: a. Greek *he*. b. some manuscripts *few things are necessary, or only one*.

COMMENT: Martha frets; Mary listens, and easy assumption. However this could be an over-simplification of the story. Indeed Jesus does seem to rebuke Martha for her task-driven anxiety and to praise Mary for sitting at his feet listening to what he said. This has been the traditional interpretation which some people have pushed to the extreme by claiming that faith and contemplative spirituality are better than works and active service. It is unlikely that Jesus meant to draw such a distinction. Life for Jesus had a much greater balance of both prayer and action, worship and work. He spent his days teaching and healing, but also frequently withdrew to a quiet place for prayer and contemplation of the presence of God in stillness and silence. The actual text of what Jesus said to Martha may have come down to us in somewhat garbled form, since various readings of verses 41-42 survive. Whatever may have been Jesus’ original words, it would

appear that he may well have urged Martha to seek first the Reign of God and let other things assume their proper place within that spiritual context, as Matthew 6:33 states. As an aside, “sitting at the feet” (verse 39) or being at someone’s feet is not necessarily a term of discipleship (as is claimed by some) but a well understood act of deference, see; Mathew 28:9; Mark 5:22 & 7:25; Luke 7:38-46, 8:41, 10:39 & 17:16; John 11:2, 11:32 & 12:3.

Psalm 52 *Quid gloriaris?* Grail Psalter

℟️ I trust in the goodness of God for ever and ever.

¹ *For the Choirmaster. A Maskil of David*

² *after Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, “David has gone to the house of Abimeleck.”*

³ Why do you boast of your wickedness,
you champion of evil,
⁴ planning ruin all day long,
(your tongue like a sharpened razor),
you master of deceit? **℟️**

⁵ You love evil more than good,
lies more than truth.

⁶ You love the destructive word,
you tongue of deceit. **℟️**

⁷ For this God will destroy you
and remove you for ever.
He will snatch you from your tent and uproot you
from the land of the living. **℟️**

⁸ The just shall see and fear.

They shall laugh and say:

⁹ “So this is the man who refused
to take God as a stronghold,
but trusted in the greatness of his wealth
and grew powerful by his crimes.” **℟️**

¹⁰ But I am like a growing olive tree
in the house of God.
I trust in the goodness of God
for ever and ever.

✠ I trust in the goodness of God for ever and ever.

¹¹ I will thank you for evermore;
for this is your doing.
I will proclaim that your name is good,
in the presence of your friends. **✠**

**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 Psalm echoes the words of the Prophets and reiterates God's judgment for social injustice and false piety.

Post Communion

Grant, O Lord, we beseech you, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by your governance, that your Church may joyfully serve you in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

Christ, who has nourished us with himself the living bread, make you one in praise and love, and raise you up at the last day; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**