

Sunday 28th July 2019

Trinity 6

Proper 12

Green



Collect

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; 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**

Genesis 18:20-32 English Standard Version (ESV)

Abraham Intercedes for Sodom

18²⁰ Then the LORD said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,²¹ I will go down to see whether they have done altogether^[a] according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know.”²² So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.²³ Then Abraham drew near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it?²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”²⁶ And the LORD said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”²⁷ Abraham answered and said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes.²⁸ Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?” And he said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.”²⁹ Again he spoke to him and said, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.”³⁰ Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there.” He answered, “I will not do

it, if I find thirty there.”³¹ He said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.”³² Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.”

Footnotes: a. or *they deserve destruction*; Hebrew *they have made a complete end*.

COMMENT: This introduction to the story relates how Abraham pleaded with God to save a few citizens of the two cities despite their apparent wickedness. Though the story does not say so, they were believed to have been located in the valley of the Dead Sea and their disappearance attributed to a violent earthquake. The heart of this passage has to do with a preliminary decision by God not to tell Abraham, God’s chosen servant, what would happen because of the grave sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. Then God does just that because God intends to reward Abraham’s faithfulness in teaching his children to be faithful and righteous (verses 17-19). While two of Abrahams’ visitors go on their way, God remains in active conversation with Abraham who petitions him to save the citizens of those toward fated cities. More of a negotiation than a prayer, Abraham beseeches God to spare Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of a diminishing number of persons, especially Abraham’s nephew Lot.

Luke 11:1-13 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Lord's Prayer

11¹ Now Jesus^[a] was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”² And he said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.’³ Give us each day our daily bread,^[b]⁴ and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.”⁵ And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves,’⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; ⁷ and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? ⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his

friend, yet because of his impudence^[c] he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹ And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for^[d] a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Footnotes: a. Greek *he*. b. or *our bread for tomorrow*. c. or *persistence*. d. some manuscripts insert *bread, will give him a stone; or if he asks for*.

COMMENT: Most of us feel rather inferior about how we pray; and so did Jesus’ disciples. Their time with Jesus, however, had shown them how much prayer meant to him and how effortless it was for him to pray. They wanted to learn from him. Would that it was so for all of us! The brief homily that follows what we call “The Lord’s Prayer” explains the willingness of God to match our requests with a grace and kindness beyond all measure. God’s answer may not be exactly what we ask for or expect. It is far more important that His answer will be the determining factor in our prayers, our lives, for us and for all the world. It is a prayer which could be said by Jews and others, as there is no reference to our Lord in the prayer - this is a universal prayer.

Psalm 85 *Benedixisti, Domine* Grail Psalter.

℟ Let us see, O Lord, your mercy.

¹ *For the Choirmaster. Of the sons of Korah. A Psalm.*

² O Lord, you once favoured your land
and revived the fortunes of Jacob,

³ you forgave the guilt of your people
and covered all their sins.

⁴ You averted all your rage,
you calmed the heat of your anger. ℟

⁵ Revive us now, God, our helper!
Put an end to your grievance against us.

⁶ Will you be angry with us for ever,
will your anger never cease? ℟

⁷ Will you not restore again our life
that your people may rejoice in you?

⁸ Let us see, O Lord, your mercy
and give us your saving help.

℟ Let us see, O Lord, your mercy.

⁹ I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace,
peace for his people and his friends
and those who turn to him in their hearts.

¹⁰ His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land. **℟**

¹¹ Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.

¹² Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven. **℟**

¹³ The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.

¹⁴ Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps. **℟**

**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 is an exilic or post exilic Psalm praying for the restoration of Israel to its land (land/earth is found in verses 2, 10, 13). The hope of the Psalm (as it must be for our Nation) is for a moral and prosperous society.

Post Communion

God of our pilgrimage, you have led us to the living water: refresh and sustain us as we go forward on our journey, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

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.**