

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2019

## Trinity 17

### Green Proper 23



#### Collect

Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you: pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself, and so bring us at last to your heavenly city where we shall see you face to face; 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**

#### 2 Timothy 2:8-15 English Standard Version (ESV)

2<sup>8</sup> Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, <sup>9</sup> for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! <sup>10</sup> Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. <sup>11</sup> The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; <sup>12</sup> if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; <sup>13</sup> if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

#### A Worker Approved by God

<sup>14</sup> Remind them of these things, and charge them before God<sup>[a]</sup> not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. <sup>15</sup> Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved,<sup>[b]</sup> a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

**Footnotes:** a. Some manuscripts *the Lord*. b. That is, one approved after being tested.

**COMMENT:** If the Pastoral Epistles date from the early 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, as many scholars believe, then this brief selection may be a hinge-piece between the Apostle Paul and the next generation of Christians. There is both a personal reference to Paul's imprisonment and a developing doctrinal and liturgical stance of the more established church. Paul took a position with regard to his incarceration which may seem somewhat suspect to our generation. Or perhaps this was the view of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century church leader as he reflected on what Paul had experienced. This presents a different view than the house arrest related in Acts 28:16-31. Here Paul is suffering, at least to the extent of "hardship" which he endured "for the sake of God's chosen ones." This sounds very much like the vicarious suffering of Isaiah 53:4-5. On the other hand, Paul did take such an approach to the trials of every Christian who confronted the worldly system of values (2 Corinthians 1:5-7; Colossians 1:24). Suffering for the faith was a characteristic theme of most New Testament authors including those who wrote the four gospels, the letters of Peter, James and the Revelation. Paul protested against the way in which his evangelistic ministry was

being thwarted by civic and religious officials unwilling to let his preaching disturb the status quo of their communities. Is that not true for our day, when Christian teaching is at odds with the permissive modern society? Paul claimed that the word of God could not be shut up. His faith remained undaunted because it rested on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This ultimately redemptive act of God would bring about the salvation of all who believed (verse 10). Subsequent history revealed that the more the early church suffered persecution, the more its message spread through the Roman world. Is this the future awaiting our own era? Dare we also keep to the Gospel truths? At this point, Paul – or the author of the Pastoral Letters making use of Paul’s experience to strengthen the church – breaks into song. Verses 11-13 may well be an early Christian hymn which contained a very simple but effective statement of faith in the resurrection not only for Christ but for all who believe. The author then turns to exhort the recipients of his letter to avoid disputes with their adversaries who apparently had a penchant for speculative argument. The concept of resurrection has been rejected by many Jews and was the laughingstock of most Greek intellectuals. But for Christians, it was the bedrock of their faith as they proclaimed God’s love for us.

### **Luke 17:11-19** English Standard Version (ESV)

#### **Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers**

17 <sup>11</sup> On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers,<sup>[a]</sup> who stood at a distance <sup>13</sup> and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” <sup>14</sup> When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. <sup>15</sup> Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; <sup>16</sup> and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup> Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? <sup>18</sup> Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup> And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”<sup>[b]</sup>

**Footnotes:** a. *Leprosy* was a term for several skin diseases; see Leviticus 13. b. *Or has saved you.*

**COMMENT:** This is one of those fascinating passages which shows Jesus’ attitudes in direct conflict with the majority of his fellow Jews and especially the religious and political leadership. He attributes faith only to the Samaritan whereas the other nine, presumably all Jews, simply did as they were told to do. Any Jew healed of leprosy was required by the covenant law to appear before a priest in Jerusalem who alone could authenticate their cure. It was only as they set out on their journey as Jesus had directed them that they were healed. So the nine were doing no more than following the accepted custom of the time. This would not apply to the Samaritan, however. He would have headed for the Samaritan sanctuary on Mount Gerizim in Samaria, not to the temple in

Jerusalem. Aware of what had happened to him and realizing God had cleansed him of his dread disease, he turned back praising God, fell at Jesus' feet and thanked him. Jesus reacted with surprise. "Were not all ten cleansed?" He marvelled that the other nine had been less grateful. He assured the Samaritan that it was his faith rather than his observance of the tradition which had brought about his healing. By his commendation of the Samaritan, Jesus was really saying that something new and different had occurred with his coming. The old ways were no longer valid. As with so many of his healing miracles, this was one more instance declaring in an action parable that the new order had broken through into human affairs. Faith rather than obedience to law was the crucial element in his teaching. In beginning the story, Luke noted especially that this occurred on the borderlands between Galilee and Samaria while Jesus was en route to Jerusalem. This particular location had more than usual significance as a prelude to what lay ahead. By Luke's time (circa AD 85) the separation of Christianity from Judaism had been widely acknowledged. Most Jews rejected the gospel and clung to old traditions. Gentiles, perhaps like Luke himself, readily accepted what they had heard and were grateful to receive it. This was also an important aspect of the story of Naaman's healing. The point Luke made is that God could be praised and God's redemptive power could be called upon wherever Jesus is present.

**Psalm 66:1-12** *Jubilate Deo* Grail Psalter

**℟** Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.

<sup>1</sup> Cry out with joy to God all the earth,

<sup>2</sup> O sing to the glory of his name.

O render him glorious praise.

<sup>3</sup> Say to God: "How tremendous your deeds! **℟**

Because of the greatness of your strength  
your enemies cringe before you.

<sup>4</sup> Before you all the earth shall bow;  
shall sing to you, sing to your name!" **℟**

<sup>5</sup> Come and see the works of God,  
tremendous his deeds among men.

<sup>6</sup> He turned the sea into dry land,  
they passed through the river dry-shod. **℟**

Let our joy then be in him;

<sup>7</sup> he rules for ever by his might.

His eyes keep watch over the nations:

let rebels not rise against him. **℟**

<sup>8</sup> O peoples, bless our God,

let the voice of his praise resound,

<sup>9</sup> of the God who gave life to our souls

and kept our feet from stumbling. **℟**

<sup>10</sup> For you, O God, have tested us,  
you have tried us as silver is tried:

<sup>11</sup> you led us, God, into the snare;  
you laid a heavy burden on our backs.

**✠ Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.**

<sup>12</sup> You let men ride over our heads;  
we went through fire and through water  
but then you brought us relief. **✠**

**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 passage may have been a psalm woven together with another (verse 13-20) to celebrate God's omnipotence and grace, and to provide a suitable liturgy for a person of wealth and status making a public offering in the temple. Most probably it later became a hymn of thanksgiving for use in public worship. There is a note of universalism in the first segment which forms the lectionary passage. The psalm begins with a call to acclaim the LORD as God not only of Israel, but of all people. All people fall down and worship in the presence of the LORD. The mighty works of the LORD testify how God deals with all mankind. Although verse 6 recalls the Exodus from Egypt, the formative event of Israel's religious history, verse 8 turns the eye toward other manifestations of divine sovereignty. The concluding verses of this segment (verses 9-12) may also refer to the Exodus and settlement of Israelites in the Promised Land. It is also possible to render them as an interpretation of the return from the exile in Babylon. In both instances, there are allusions to defeat, enslavement and liberation. Since the psalm is probably of post-exilic date, it is likely that the later event could only be made meaningful by being interpreted in a manner similar to the more ancient traditions of the Exodus.

### **Post Communion**

Lord, we pray that your grace may always precede and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen**

### **The Blessing**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep *your* hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**