

Daily Prayer

Feria

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God. Today we hold in our prayers the ordinary moments in life—the trials and the joys.

We begin by saying

O Lord, open our lips,

and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

The First Reading

You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

James 1.19-27

The Psalm

Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? ♦
Who may rest upon your holy hill?

Whoever leads an uncorrupt life ♦
and does the thing that is right;

Who speaks the truth from the heart ♦
and bears no deceit on the tongue;

Who does no evil to a friend ♦
and pours no scorn on a neighbour;

In whose sight the wicked are not esteemed, ♦
but who honours those who fear the Lord.

Whoever has sworn to a neighbour ♦
and never goes back on that word;

Who does not lend money in hope of gain, ♦
nor takes a bribe against the innocent;

Whoever does these things ♦
shall never fall.

Psalm 15

The Gospel Reading

'But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even

sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'

Luke 6.27-38

We continue with the reflection that follows. In silence, we ask what the reading has to say to us today. Is there something in the reflection that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?

The Reflection

Paul MacLean

There is a phrase from the Epistle of James that has been rolling around in my head for several weeks, and that is 'the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God' (KJV). I've been caught up of course, as so many of us have, with the so called 'Freedom Convoy' and the great swirl of justification, condemnation and general commentary that has surrounded it. I've been particularly conscious of the way in which it has evoked anger, or in the more colourful language of the 17th century, wrath. Anger and wrath at every level: in the participants, in those who are affected by their actions, in supporters, in detractors, in those of us looking on. It's like an infection that has spread with as much virulence as the latest variant of the virus itself, infecting and disturbing our core values, our participation in and view of our Canadian society, and sometimes even our close relationships.

And so, my antidote, my vaccine, has been that phrase from James.

Now, I'm writing this on Sunday morning, and so far the news is encouraging. The protestors are dispersing without violence, at least at the international border at Windsor. I can only hope that by the time you read this reflection on Wednesday the encouraging news will have continued.

There's a further message for us in this passage from James than the memorable phrase about wrath and righteousness:

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. (NIV)

Here is the dominant theme of the Epistle: be doers of the Word—put your faith into action. I was struck on reading the whole passage at the vivid contrast between looking at yourself in the mirror (and then forgetting your face!) and then looking into another glass of sparkling clear crystal that has 'the perfect law that gives freedom', or we could say, looking into the face of Jesus Christ. And what is that face? The 'perfect law' is in fact the acts of service that flow from self-giving love. These are the acts of love and service that we have seen so much of from health care professionals over the past two years, given daily and sacrificially so that eventually we may be free from the ravages of the virus. And we bless them for it.

It's not easy to be 'doers of the Word' - giving acts of love, kindness, service, listening - when wrath and anger swirl about and take up so

much of our environment. But surely, that's the message for us today as we read this Epistle written for the benefit of Christians through the ages. It's an alternative way of life, one we have confidence will ultimately produce much fruit and creativity.

A question to end, provoked by the phrase 'the perfect law that gives freedom': what is the connection between sacrificial love, or just simply 'service' which is the way we put love into action in a daily, mundane way, and freedom. Does love-in-action make us free? Free from what? Or perhaps it's better to say, Free to do what?

When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle

The Canticle ~ A Song of God's Love

*God's love was revealed among us
so that we might live through Jesus.*

Beloved, let us love one another,
for love is of God; ♦
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

Whoever does not love does not know God, ♦
for God is love.

In this the love of God was revealed among us, ♦
that God sent his only Son into the world,
so that we might live through him.

In this is love,
not that we loved God but that he loved us, ♦
and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.

Beloved, since God loved us so much, ♦
we ought also to love one another.

For if we love one another, God abides in us, ♦
and God's love will be perfected in us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son
And to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning is now
And shall be for ever

*God's love was revealed among us
so that we might live through Jesus.*

1 John 4.7-11, 12b

*We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God (The Intercessions)
and continue with the concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.*

The Intercessions

For all the peoples of the world;
that they may know you as the God of peace,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

For nations, for leaders and governments;
that integrity may mark all their dealings,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who labour for righteousness;
that your presence and help may give them courage,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

For communities torn by dissension and strife;
that your forgiveness may bring them healing,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

For the anxious, the lonely, the bereaved;
that consolation and peace may be theirs,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, your household and family;
that she may be firm in the confession of her hope,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who are separated from us by death;
that theirs may be the kingdom which is unshakeable,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

O God of peace,
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great Shepherd of the sheep:
make us perfect in all goodness to do your will
and to be what you would have us be;
through him to whom be glory for ever,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Our prayers conclude

Lord of all,
through your power you created us in the beginning
and through your love you call us back to you each day.
Open our hearts to the promptings of your Spirit,
that our lives would be filled with your peace, your joy, and your
righteousness,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen

We conclude

May Christ, who sends us to the nations,
give us the power of his Spirit.
Amen.

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The Psalm: Common Worship: Psalter © The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing.

The Canticle: Common Worship: Canticles © The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing.

The Intercessions: Scottish Episcopal Church—Form 1 (adapted)

The Collect: The Canterbury Book of New Parish Prayers, M.J. Kramer © 2021, Canterbury Press

The Concluding Sentence: Common Worship: Daily Prayer © The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing.

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