

Sunday, February 12, 2017
Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

INTRODUCTION

In today's reading from Deuteronomy we are called to choose life by loving and obeying God. Much of today's gospel reading echoes portions of the Ten Commandments. Jesus' instructions to the crowd reveal a pattern of behavior that honors both God and the neighbor, resulting in life and health for the whole community. We, too, are invited to embrace these commandments, not out of fear of retribution, but because God has promised that to do so means life for us.

PRELUDE

"Ubi Caritas"

Charles Callahan

***GATHERING SONG**

"The Church's One Foundation"

ELW 654

- 1 The church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
she is his new creation
by water and the word.
From heav'n he came and sought her
to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her,
and for her life he died.**
- 2 Elect from ev'ry nation,
yet one o'er all the earth,
her charter of salvation
one Lord, one faith, one birth:
one holy name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with ev'ry grace endued.**
- 3 Though with a scornful wonder
this world sees her oppressed,
by schisms rent asunder,
by heresies distressed,
yet saints their watch are keeping;
their cry goes up: "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
shall be the morn of song.**
- 4 Through toil and tribulation
and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation
of peace forevermore;
till with the vision glorious**

**her longing eyes are blest,
and the great church victorious
shall be the church at rest.**

**5 Yet she on earth has union
with God, the Three in One,
and mystic sweet communion
with those whose rest is won.
Oh, blessed heav'nly chorus!
Lord, save us by your grace,
that we, like saints before us,
may see you face to face.**

***GREETING**

P *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

G **And also with you**

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

**Gloria, Gloria, Gloria,
glory to God on high!
Gloria, Gloria, Gloria,
glory to God on high!
And on earth peace to God's people.
Glory to God.
And on earth peace to God's people.
Glory to God.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P *O God,*

G **the strength of all who hope in you, because we are weak mortals we accomplish nothing good without you. Help us to see and understand the things we ought to do, and give us grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen!**

FIRST READING

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

The Lord sets before the people of God a clear choice. Life and prosperity will come to the faithful; loss of the land will be the consequence of disobedience. Choosing life entails loving and holding fast to the Lord. Life in God's presence presupposes the promise made to the ancestors.

[Moses said to the people:] ¹⁵See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. ¹⁶If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. ¹⁷But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter

and possess. ¹⁹I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Reflection

What are the choices that Israel has from God? (verse 15) What does it mean to obey the commandments? (verse 16) What would make for disobedience? (verse 17) What will happen if the Israelites disobey? (verse 18) What is the promise if they obey? (verses 19-20) This seems quite simple. What actually happened? (For example, read Jeremiah 34.) What choices do we as followers of Christ have? Have our choices changed from those of the people of Israel? Are there ways, upon reading this text, that we choose death? What does it mean for us to choose life rather than death? Why does God give these rules? Are they arbitrary? Why does disobedience lead to death? Is it because God simply wants us to follow his rules? Or is it because a loving God loves us and wants us to live life fully? What do you think?

PSALM 119:1-8

¹Happy are they whose | way is blameless,
who follow the teaching | of the LORD!
²**Happy are they who observe | your decrees**
and seek you with | all their hearts,
³who never do | any wrong,
but always walk | in your ways.
⁴**You laid down | your commandments,**
that we should | fully keep them.
⁵Oh, that my ways were made | so direct
that I might | keep your statutes!
⁶**Then I should not be | put to shame,**
when I regard all | your commandments.
⁷I will thank you with | a true heart,
when I have learned your | righteous judgments.
⁸**I will | keep your statutes;**
do not utter- | ly forsake me.

Reflection

Psalm 119 is a psalm celebrating God's law. It uses nine different words for God's instruction: law, decrees, ways, precepts, statutes, commandments, ordinances, word, and promise. (Of course the original words are in Hebrew, and each eight lines of each stanza begins in Hebrew with the same letter: all the lines in this text begin with the Hebrew letter aleph. Read this text over and find out how many of the nine words are used in this stanza. What is the promise of this psalm text? (verses 1-3—sound familiar?) What is the prayer of the psalmist, and those who are reading or praying this psalm? (verses 5-8) How does this help us to choose life?

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Human leaders in the church are not the ones who control ministry. Rather they are fellow workers who belong to God, the one who truly controls and continuously empowers the ministry of the church.

¹Brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. ²I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, ³for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? ⁴For when one says, “I belong to Paul,” and another, “I belong to Apollos,” are you not merely human?

⁵What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. ⁹For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.

Reflection

If we choose to take forward the options of choosing life or death, what is Paul’s concern about the choice that the Corinthian Christians are making by their actions toward one another? Paul’s words in this text for the choice between death and life are “flesh” and “spirit.” What are the signs that the Corinthians are living out the life of the flesh? (verses 3-4) What are they arguing about? (verse 4) Does Paul think it matters who baptized you? (verses 4-5) What matters about your baptism? What is our role as Christians in nurturing others in Christ? (verses 5-9) Who do we serve? (verse 9) How do you, and we as a Christian community, go about “planting and watering”? How are we together “God’s field” and “God’s building”? (verse 9) (Paul uses the field metaphor in this text; to read about the building metaphor read verses 10-17)

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Allelu alleluia glory to the Lord
Allelu alleluia glory to the Lord
Allelu alleluia glory to the Lord
Alleluia glory to the Lord**

***GOSPEL**

Matthew 5:21-37

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exhorts his followers to embrace standards of righteousness that exceed legal requirements and traditional expectations.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ²¹“You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ ²²But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire. ²³So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

²⁹If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

³¹“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³²But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

³³“Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’ ³⁴But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.”

Reflection

To whom is Jesus speaking in this text? We can assume, I think, that he is speaking very specifically to those in the Christian community. (His words make sense for others, too... but for us they are akin to what Paul was saying to the Corinthian Christians about how they need to live together in order to follow Christ.) What does Jesus have to say about the commandment against murder? (In our numbering, the fifth commandment.) (verses 21-22) What are the consequences in the community if you are angry or insulting to a brother or sister? What are the consequences to a worshipping community if there is anger and insults? What does Jesus tell us to do if we remember (notice: not that we have something against someone else! but) that someone has something against us? (verses 23-24) We are not to allow anger to come between us before we eat the Lord’s Supper together! (That’s why the offering comes first in the order of worship—before we go to the Table together! And you can’t leave your offering if you are in conflict with someone in the community.) What if someone is so angry that they are taking you to court? (verses 25—26) Settle out of court!!! Do what you need to do. What do you think “the last penny” is? Why is adultery, or divorce difficult for the community? (Nothing is ever “just between the two”!) Why is lying so destructive? (verses 33-37) We have only to look at the political arena to know how difficult lies are in our nation. It’s almost a rule that if someone says, “Believe me!” or “Trust me!” you’d better not believe or trust. Why does Jesus say not to swear an oath—“As God is my witness”—? If we cannot believe each other simply because of the relationship we have in Christ as brothers and sisters, it hurts! Have you experienced any of these consequences in your life? What sort of relationship do you have with the sisters and brothers you worship with? Why are Jesus’ words to us so important?

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Kris Langdon

CREATING A NEW WAY OF LIVING

Rev. Jim Pierce

SERMON

"Gift of Reconciliation"

Rev. Roger Lenander

SONG OF THE DAY

"Bind Us Together"

Refrain

**Bind us together Lord
Bind us together with cords
That cannot be broken**

**Bind us together Lord
Bind us together Lord
Bind us together with love**

**There is only one God
There is only one King
There is only one body
That is why we can sing**

**You are the fam'ly of God
You are the promise divine
You are God's chosen desire
You are the glorious new wine**

***APOSTLES' CREED**

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**☒ I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen!**

PRAYER SONG *"Make Me a Servant"

**Make me a servant,
humble and meek.
Lord let me lift up
those who are weak.
And may the prayer of my heart always be:
Make me a servant,
make me a servant,
make me a servant today.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Called to be a light to the nations, let us pray for God's justice, peace, and healing.

A brief silence.

Holy Lord, you alone are God. Remove jealousy and quarreling between Christian denominations. Hold us in the unity of our baptism as we work together to serve you. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You called into being the first fruits of the earth. Guide gardeners and farmers who till the soil and tend the fields. Bless their work and in due season bring forth the bounty of the land. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Merciful Lord, your love knows no bounds. Break down barriers caused by nationalism. Challenge our stereotypes. Give us courage to engage in difficult conversations with those whose experiences are different from our own. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on all who struggle. Ease the pain of families affected by divorce. Grant life-giving work to all who seek employment. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of sufferers: hear our prayers and grant your healing for those who may be sick or in pain. *We especially pray for Sharmyn, Bob, Sheylin, Terry, Stephanie, John, Dorothy, Linda, Scott, Alva.* We also pray for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (*pause for 10 seconds*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You know every hair on our heads. Yet we do not even know each of our neighbors. Equip our outreach ministry and this assembly to get to know the people in our community. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Eternal Lord, you are the God of our ancestors in faith. You are our God. Keep us faithful until we join all the saints at your heavenly banquet. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Receive these prayers in the name of Christ, the light of the world, who is one with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.
Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

- ☞ The peace of Christ be with you always.
- ☞ **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY

"I Want Jesus To Walk With Me"

arr. Mark Hayes

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE "Give Thanks"**

**Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because he's given
Jesus Christ, his Son.**

**Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because he's given
Jesus Christ, his Son.
Give thanks!**

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P *Merciful God,*

C **receive the gifts we bring, our selves, our time, and our possessions.
Through this meal unite us as your body, shining with the light of
your justice and mercy; for the sake of him who gave himself for us,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!**

***DIALOGUE**

P *The Lord be with you.*

C **And also with you.**

P *Lift up your hearts.*

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

***PREFACE**

P *It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.*

*By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations;
in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son;
and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord God,
God of might and power; holy is the Lord.
Holy, holy, holy, holy Lord God,
God of might and power; holy is the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna here on earth.
Blest is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna here on earth.**

Blest is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P *Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:*

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

*Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
the Word made flesh.*

In the night in which he was betrayed,

our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

*Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:*

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

G **Christ has died.**

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

P *With this bread and cup*

*we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.*

We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.

We look with hope for his coming.

G **Come, Lord Jesus.**

P *Holy God, we long for your Spirit.*

Come among us.

Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us.

Awaken your people.

Fill us with your light.

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

G **Come, Holy Spirit.**

P *All praise and glory are yours,*

Holy One of Israel,

Word of God incarnate,

Power of the Most High,

one God, now and forever.

☩ Amen!

***LORD'S PRAYER**

**☩ 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 forever. Amen!**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

☩ *We who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.
Come. Be filled with light and life.*

COMMUNION

***BLESSING**

☩ *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and
keep you in his grace.*

☩ Amen!

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

☩ *O Morning Star, fair and bright,*
**☩ you have refreshed us again with heavenly food. You are our
dearest treasure. Go with us now—today, tomorrow, every day—
that we tell the story of your never-ending love and sing your
praise both now and forever. Amen!**

***BENEDICTION**

☩ *The God of glory dwell in you richly,
name you beloved,
and shine brightly on your path;
and the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, the ☩ Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.*

☩ Amen!

SENDING SONG *"They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love"

**We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.
And they'll know we are Christians
by our love, by our love.
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love**

**We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand.
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand.
And together we'll spread the news that God is in the land.
And they'll know we are Christians
by our love, by our love.
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love**

**We will work with each other, we will work side by side.
We will work with each other, we will work side by side.
And we'll guard each one's dignity, and save each one's pride.
And they'll know we are Christians
by our love, by our love.
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love**

**All praise to the Father, from whom all things come.
And all praise to Christ Jesus, His only Son.
And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one.
And they'll know we are Christians
by our love, by our love.
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love**

***DISMISSAL**

☞ Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

☞ Thanks be to God!