

Sunday, February 19, 2017
Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

INTRODUCTION

In today's first reading we hear, "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." Yet we know we cannot achieve perfection. Our attempts to love neighbors and even our enemies fall short of what God desires for us. Yet in Jesus we see one who loved even those who persecuted and killed him. We are made holy in baptism, and forgiven at the table of God's mercy. As a people made holy by God, we go in peace to love as we have been loved.

PRELUDE

"How Firm a Foundation"

Gilbert Martin

***GATHERING SONG**

"Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty"

ELW 533

**Open now thy gates of beauty,
Zion, let me enter there,
where my soul in joyful duty
waits for God who answers prayer.
Oh, how blessed is this place,
filled with solace, light, and grace!**

**Gracious God, I come before thee;
come thou also unto me;
where we find thee and adore thee,
there a heav'n on earth must be.
To my heart, oh, enter thou,
let it be thy temple now!**

**Here thy praise is gladly chanted,
here thy seed is duly sown;
let my soul, where it is planted,
bring forth precious sheaves alone,
so that all I hear may be
fruitful unto life in me.**

**Thou my faith increase and quicken,
let me keep thy gift divine;
howsoe'er temptations thicken,
may thy word still o'er me shine
as my guiding star through life,
as my comfort in all strife.**

**Speak, O God, and I will hear thee,
let thy will be done indeed;
may I undisturbed draw near thee
while thou dost thy people feed.
Here of life the fountain flows;
here is balm for all our woes.**

***GREETING**

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

☞ **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**

☞ *Holy God of compassion,*

☞ **you invite us into your way of forgiveness and peace. Lead us to love our enemies, and transform our words and deeds to be like his through whom we pray, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen!**

ANTHEM

"Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ"

Austin Lovelace

Chancel Choir

FIRST READING

Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18

The Holiness Code in Leviticus urges people to be holy since God is holy. Holiness is lived out in partiality for and consideration of the poor and the weak. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves.

¹The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

²Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

⁹When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God.

¹¹You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; and you shall not lie to one another. ¹²And you shall not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God: I am the LORD.

¹³You shall not defraud your neighbor; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning. ¹⁴You shall not revile the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind; you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

¹⁵You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. ¹⁶You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

¹⁷You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. ¹⁸You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Reflection

Why should the people of Israel “be holy”? (verses 1-2) What does it mean to be holy? (For a clue, we can read the rest of the text. It includes details about what it means to be holy.) As you read verses 9-18, is there anything that is a surprise to you? What does leaving the gleanings of the harvest for poor members of the community, and for resident aliens have to do with being holy? For a story about a poor resident alien gleaner, read Ruth 2. It seems obvious what not stealing, not dealing falsely, not lying (or using alternative facts), not swearing an oath you don’t intend to keep (“swearing falsely by my name”) have to do with being holy, but I would ask you to stop and think about it. What is lost when someone steals from you, or cheats you, or lies to you, or makes promises they won’t keep? (verses 11-12) The same with verses 13-14. Not paying a laborer the same day (or when their wages are due) means they won’t be able to eat—these are people who live from paycheck to paycheck. Making fun of people who are disadvantaged (verse 14) is also forbidden. Although we rarely see judgments that are partial to the poor, but often we see deference to the rich, any judgment that is partial in ignorance of the facts is detrimental to the community. What does it mean to “love your neighbor as yourself”? Why should we treat others with love and compassion?

PSALM 119:33-40

³³Teach me, O LORD, the way | of your statutes,
and I shall keep it | to the end.

³⁴**Give me understanding, and I shall | keep your teaching;
I shall keep it with | all my heart.**

³⁵Lead me in the path of | your commandments,
for that is | my desire.

³⁶**Incline my heart to | your decrees
and not to | unjust gain.**

³⁷Turn my eyes from be- | holding falsehood;
give me life | in your way.

³⁸**Fulfill your promise | to your servant,
which is for | those who fear you.**

³⁹Turn away the reproach | that I dread,
because your judg- | ments are good.

⁴⁰**Behold, I long for | your commandments;
by your righteousness en- | liven me.**

Reflection

We continue with reading excerpts from Psalm 119, which is a psalm teaching about the law and praising God for the goodness of the law. What is the psalmist praying for in this text? What happens when our whole understanding and heartfelt observance is on God’s law, or God’s word?

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23

Jesus Christ is the foundation of the church and its ministry. We are God’s temple because God’s Spirit dwells in us, and we belong to Christ. Hence we are called to build wisely upon this sure foundation not for our own benefit but for others to experience Christ’s benefits.

¹⁰According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. ¹¹For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

¹⁶Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷If anyone

destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

¹⁸Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written,

“He catches the wise in their craftiness,”

²⁰and again,

“The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise,
that they are futile.”

²¹So let no one boast about human leaders. For all things are yours, ²²whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all belong to you, ²³and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Reflection

Paul reminds the Corinthians, who have been arguing about which of their former pastors was the best, what the real foundation of their faith is. What is it? (verses 10-11) What does Paul mean that “you are God’s temple and God’s Spirit dwells in you”? (verse 16) Like the Corinthians, we are often tempted to either think bodies don’t matter, or think too much about what they look like. If we are God’s temple, what does that say about how we are to treat our bodies and our spirits that live within our bodies? Why does Paul say we are to be holy? (verse 17) We may also value our own wisdom too highly. What does Paul say about that? (verse 18) What is the judgment of human wisdom? (verses 19-20) What does Paul say about human leaders? (verses 21-23) What do human leaders have to do with our life in God? How should we treat our leaders?

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

“Halle, Halle, Hallelujah”

ELW 172

**Halle, halle, hallelujah.
Halle, halle, hallelujah.
Halle, halle, hallelujah.
Hallelujah. Hallelujah.**

***GOSPEL**

Matthew 5:38-48

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declares an end to the law of vengeance. God’s people will respond to evil with love and forgiveness.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. ⁴²Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Reflection

How does Jesus redefine the law that attempted to limit retribution, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"? This law was given so that if someone in your family was killed, you could not kill that person AND his children, spouse, or parents. What does Jesus say about treating someone who hurts you? (verses 38-42) Look again at Leviticus 19:18. What does it say about who we should love? What does Jesus say? (verses 44-47) How is it possible to follow this command of Jesus? I know I find it very difficult! I'd rather laugh at them, or swear at them! Have you seen someone who loves their enemies? What examples of this could you give? What does it mean to be perfect as God is perfect? Who can enable us to love as God loves? As we read this text, return to what Jesus said about the law in Matthew 5:17. How does Jesus fulfill the law?

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Debbie Kunz

SERMON

"Who Is My Enemy?"

Rev. Gary Teske

SONG OF THE DAY

"Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading"

ELW 401

Njoo kwetu, Roho mwema

**Gracious Spirit, heed our pleading,
fashion us all anew.
It's your leading that we're needing,
help us to follow you.**

Refrain

**Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.
Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.**

**Come to teach us, come to nourish
those who believe in Christ.
Bless the faithful, may they flourish,
strengthened by grace unpriced. *Refrain***

**Guide our thinking and our speaking
done in your holy name.
Motivate all in their seeking,
freeing from guilt and shame. *Refrain***

**Not mere knowledge, but discernment,
nor rootless liberty;
turn disquiet to contentment,
doubt into certainty. *Refrain***

**Keep us fervent in our witness;
unswayed by earth's allure.
Ever grant us zealous fitness,
which you alone assure. *Refrain***

***APOSTLES' CREED**

pg. 105

**☒ 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** *"Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus" chorus only*

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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

A brief silence.

Make the church in every land holy as you are holy, O God. Join the voices of rich and poor, young and old, friends and enemies, in praise of you. Orchestrate harmony among us. Lord, in your mercy,

Yu marimari long mipela.

We pray for clean air, clean water, and clean soil. Renew the sky, land, and waterways. Teach us how to care for the earth as you desire. Lord, in your mercy,

Yu marimari long mipela.

We pray for an end to war and for peace throughout the world. Prosper the work of peacemakers, erase hatred, and stop violence. Lord, in your mercy,

Yu marimari long mipela.

We pray for all who live with cognitive disorders or eating disorders. Provide them with supportive communities. Restore the forgotten; comfort the mourning; heal the hurting. Lord, in your mercy,

Yu marimari long mipela.

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,

Yu marimari long mipela.

We pray for all who are discerning a call to ministry and those who accompany them. Empower them with your grace and wisdom to continue building on the foundation of faith we have in Jesus Christ. Lord, in your mercy,

Yu marimari long mipela.

We give thanks for the faithful departed *especially Denton Matteson* and we pray for those who will die today. Hold them in your loving embrace. Breathe your Spirit of peace into them. Lord, in your mercy,

Yu marimari long mipela.

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.

☞ **Mir Vam**

OFFERTORY

"Be Thou My Vision"

arr. Mark Hayes

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

"For the Fruit of All Creation"

ELW 679

vv. 3 only

**For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all, that love has found us,
thanks be to God.**

***OFFERING PRAYER**

☞ *Merciful God,*

☞ **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**

☞ *The Lord be with you.*

☞ **And also with you.**

℘ *Lift up your hearts.*

☞ **We lift them to the Lord.**

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

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

***PREFACE**

℘ *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**

℘ *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:*

☞ Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

☞ *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.*

☞ Come, Lord Jesus.

☞ *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.*

☞ Come, Holy Spirit.

☞ *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

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

G **Amen!**

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P *O Morning Star, fair and bright,*

G **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

P *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 \mp Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.*

G **Amen!**

*SENDING SONG

"Every Time I Feel the Spirit"

Refrain

**Every time I feel the Spirit
moving in my heart I will pray.
Yes, every time I feel the Spirit
moving in my heart I will pray.**

**Upon the mountain, my Lord spoke,
out of his mouth came fire and smoke.
All around me, looks so fine,
ask my Lord if all was mine. *Refrain***

**Jordan River, chilly and cold,
chills the body, not the soul.
Ain't but one train on this track,
runs to heaven and right back. *Refrain***

**I have heartache, I have woe,
I have trouble here below.
While God leads me I'll not fear,
I am sheltered by God's care. *Refrain***

*DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

G **Thanks be to God!**