

Introduction

21 June 2020

God does not promise that the path of the disciple will be easy. Jeremiah feels the pain of rejection from those who do not want to hear what he has to say. Jesus declares that his words may bring stark division. Even so, we need not be afraid for God accounts for each hair on our heads. Though we may experience rejection, frustration, division, and death, God's grace and love make us a new creation each day. Marked with the cross and filled with holy food, we are sent from worship to witness to Christ in the world.

Prayer of the Day

Teach us, good Lord God, to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, except that of knowing that we do your will, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

Amen.

Romans 6:1b-11

In baptism we were incorporated into the reality of Christ's death and resurrection. We have been made new in Christ through his death and resurrection to live freed from sin.

^{1b}Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 10:24-39

Jesus warns his disciples that their ministry in his name will meet with opposition. However, he assures them that they need not fear for the truth will come to light. Life is found in Christ.

[Jesus said to the twelve:] ²⁴"A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; ²⁵it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

²⁶"So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

³²"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; ³³but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

³⁴"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵For I have come to set a man against his father,

and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
³⁶and one's foes will be members of one's own household.

³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

Sermon

Pentecost 3 A – Romans 6:1b-11, Matthew 10:24-39

Free from Sin, Still Mired in Sinning

Our Baptism into the death and rising of Jesus frees us from the consequences of sin, even as we remain mortal, imperfect creatures

The apostle Paul
is the single most prolific writer
of the New Testament.

Thirteen of twenty-seven books of the Greek scriptures
have been attributed to him.

And after very careful scrutiny by scholars
at least seven of them are very likely to have
been composed or dictated by him.

The others from students who admired Paul.

Several parts of the liturgies we follow come
from this servant of the Lord:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit...,
which we use as a greeting,
is from his second letter to the Corinthians.

The heart of the communion prayer over bread and wine is from 1 Corinthians.

And at funerals and Baptisms we read a portion of Romans chapter 6 –
When we were Baptised in Christ Jesus,
we were Baptised into his death.
We were buried with him by Baptism into death,
so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,
we too might live a new life.

Indeed, many argue that Paul teaches us more about our connection to Jesus
than any other theologian, writer, or saint.

In this particular case,
Paul offers his instruction to those in the young Roman Church,
before he has had a chance to meet them.

Some on the community have decided that since Jesus' death saves them from sin, and that there is nothing they can do or have to do in order to make God love them more, that they are free to do or not to do anything that pleases them.

They're just putting in time until Jesus returns, and don't see any reason to lift a finger to help others.

Jesus will forgive any foolish, destructive or selfish thing they feel like doing. Which makes steam come out of the apostles' ears.

Yes, he says,
Jesus' death frees us from the punishment our sinfulness requires.

There's nothing more any of us can do to increase God love for us.

But in being forgiven, loved, and freed
we are called to share these very blessings with others.

Not to earn something,
but to show others what God is like,
and to express thanks for God's goodness.

We love as we have been loved.

Which means feeding the hungry,
listening to the lonely,
walking with the weary,
helping the weak,
guiding the lost.

This is no time to sit around and gaze at our navels,
but to notice those who could use some assistance,
and offer it to them in the name of Jesus.

Indeed, if we are connected to Jesus,
by something like a spiritual umbilical cord,
it has to do with his crucifixion and resurrection.

For followers of his there will be hardship, suffering, and death,
as well as peace, joy and new life.

You can't have one without the other.

Winter precedes spring.

Good Friday is a prerequisite of Easter.

Paul also says that while we have been set free from sin,
by the mercy of God,
there's no guarantee that we will always make the right choices.

It will take effort,
and daily remembrance of God's grace,
for us to stop doing things that cause harm to us, and others and creation,
and to start doing the kinds of things that express respect, kindness and justice for all.

It will take practice for us to live up to our new status as children of God.

To be like our heavenly parent,
and our brother Jesus.

But we won't be working alone.
God's Spirit accompanies us.
And our sisters and brothers walk beside us.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

P Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

A brief silence.

A Providing God, your creation shows us that life comes from death. Renew the places where our land, air, and waterways have been ill for too long. Direct the work of all who care for birds and their habitats. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Expansive God, you bring diverse voices together to form your church. Open our hearts and unstop our ears so that we might from our First Nations neighbours and the elders of the elder of Kanawake, that differences might not overshadow our unity. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Protecting God, sustain and keep safe all who work to defend others across the world. Revive and strengthen organisations dedicated to caring for refugees and migrants while their homelands struggle for peace. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Loving God, you promise to be with all who are persecuted for your sake. Guide all who speak your word of justice and console any who are tormented or targeted for being who they are, including those allied with the Black Lives Matters movement. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Healing God, support those who contend with COVID-19, and all who are troubled by illness or injury, including... Even in our isolation allow us to care for one another. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Compassionate God, you are with us and we are never alone. Bless all fathers and father figures who strive to love and nurture as you do. Comfort all who long to be fathers and all for whom this day is difficult. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

- A Reigning God, you bless us with guides and caretakers in the faith. As we give thanks for those who have died, including Anne, increase our care for one another until we walk with them in newness of life. Hear us, O God.
- C **Your mercy is great.**
- P Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C **Amen.**

Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God, the creator, ✝ Jesus, the Christ,
and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,
bless you and keep you in eternal love.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.