

February 28, 2021
2 Lent B
St. Mary's-in-the-Valley Episcopal Church
P.O. Box 491, Ramona, CA 92065

Opening Hymn: What Wondrous Love Is This
Sung and Played by Rob and Deborah Lewallen

1 What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul?
What wondrous love is this, O my soul?
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?

2 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing,
to God and to the Lamb I will sing,
to God and to the Lamb who is the great I Am,
while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
while millions join the theme, I will sing.

3 And when from death I'm free I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on,
and when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,
and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
and through eternity I'll sing on.

BCP, page 355

Blessed the Lord who forgives all our sins.
People: God's mercy endures forever. Amen.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known and from you no secrets are hid:
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly
love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy

The Celebrant then says
 The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Celebrant Let us pray.

Collect

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.” Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people
Thanks be to God

Psalm 22:22-30

Deus, Deus meus

22 Praise the LORD, you that fear him; *
stand in awe of him, O offspring of Israel;
all you of Jacob's line, give glory.

23 For he does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty;
neither does he hide his face from them; *
but when they cry to him he hears them.

24 My praise is of him in the great assembly; *
I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship him.

- 25 The poor shall eat and be satisfied,
and those who seek the LORD shall praise him: *
"May your heart live for ever!"
- 26 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, *
and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.
- 27 For kingship belongs to the LORD; *
he rules over the nations.
- 28 To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship; *
all who go down to the dust fall before him.
- 29 My soul shall live for him;
my descendants shall serve him; *
they shall be known as the LORD's for ever.
- 30 They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn *
the saving deeds that he has done.

Romans 4:13-25

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") —in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Thanks be to God

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark

Glory to you Lord Christ

Mark 8:31-38

Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Christ

Sermon:

2 Lent B February 25, 2018
Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 Psalm 22:22-30
Romans 4:13-25 Mark 8:31-38

I would like to organize my words today around some verses from the appointed Psalm of the day: "My soul shall live for him; my descendants shall serve him; they shall be known as the Lord's for ever. They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn the saving deeds that he has done.

How would I characterize this words of poetry from the Psalms? I would say that they are "forward looking." They express a hope for the future of people yet unborn, that these people will know and understand the saving deeds of God in the past.

This means that the present as a bridge between the past and the not yet future. If we are the bridge between the past the future, what kind of traffic do we want to allow on this bridge?

According to Psalmist, what needs to be transported into the future are the saving deeds of God. What this means is that we are to bring the very best of the past as the model for a better future.

I think that the Apostle Paul and the Gospel communities believed that bridge of Judaism of their day was not bringing the salvation of God to enough people.

St. Paul and the followers of Jesus came to understand that Jesus of Nazareth was the bridge person to bring the glad tidings of God from the ancient past to the future in the a fuller and more complete way.

St. Paul believed that Jesus was the bridge to the future of belief in the One God among the Gentile peoples of the world.

And St. Paul made reference to how the saving deeds of God came to Abraham, this pre-Israelite figure who had a covenant with God, and how Abraham understood that God was going to make him the father of a great number of people. Yes, this included his great-grand children, the sons of Jacob who became the patriarchs for the tribes of Israel; but Paul understood that Abraham was the father of faith for people who were not Israelites. He believe that God's saving deeds could be known by God-fearing people who lived by faith, even without the benefits of the traditions of the Israelites.

St. Paul and the followers of Jesus understood Jesus to be a bridge from Abraham to the Gentile people. Jesus was the bridge to bring the message of salvation to a much wider audience than was happening in the Judaism of his time. And the early church understood that Jesus qualified to be the Messiah.

To confess Jesus as the Messiah required a change in thinking about the life and ministry of much speculated about figure of the Messiah. It also involved being real about the political realities of the first century.

Was the Messiah going to be like David, a king hero, who with military prowess would be able to re-establish the borders of Israel for God's people? Would such a Messiah re-gather all of the Jews who lived outside of Israel in the Diaspora? Was it realistic to think that this kind of Messiah would appear?

The reason Jesus rebuked Peter is that even though Peter confessed Jesus to be the Messiah, he did not understand what kind of Messiah Jesus would be. Peter, in his ignorance, represented everyone who did not understand what kind of Messiah that Jesus was.

Jesus was a Suffering servant Messiah. He was going to suffer, die, but then manifest the Messianic power by coming back to life in the world and inhabit the interior lives of everyone in the world who wanted to know this inner conquest by a Holy Spirit power.

This is how Jesus would be the bridge from Abraham to the nations with a Gospel of grace, faith and mercy to all. This was the message God's saving deeds to people yet unborn being fulfilled.

Jesus would be the Messiah manifested as an inward Risen Christ, available to all people in the world. And how did this happen?

It was happening through the mystical program of coming into an identity with the Risen Christ. It was understanding the death and resurrection of Christ as a directed higher power to die to one's selfish tendencies and allow a new life of love to be so profound that one would form the practice of a new community. And this new community was a community of welcome for everyone.

The catch phrases of the Jesus Movement for the continual renewal of one's life, were to "take up one's cross," and "to lose one's life," that is one's soul life to find renewed mind and spirit.

Jesus was the way in which the faith of Abraham became the faith and salvation of the yet unborn people of the future. You and I today, remain as a bridge to the future. We want to leave a better place to the people yet unborn. We want people of the future to know that we cared for this world and that we did our part to leave a witness to the love and justice which befits the life of Jesus Christ.

Let us today accept our role as being bridge people to a better future as we bring the very best practice of the love and justice of Jesus Christ into the future. Amen.

The Nicene Creed (page 357)

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People:

Confession

Let us confess our sins against God and our Neighbor
Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins
through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all
goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in
eternal life. Amen.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you

Anthem: Be Thou My Vision

St. James Press, ID 21254

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art;
Thou my best thought by day or by night,
Waking and sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my battleshield, sword for the fight;
Be Thou my dignity, thou my delight;
Thou my soul's Shelter, Thou my high tow'r,
Raise Thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and Thou only first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

Doxology: Sung by Rob and Deb Lewallen

Eucharistic Prayer A

The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Celebrant Lift up your hearts.
People We lift them to the Lord.
Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who was tempted in every way as we are, yet did not sin. By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil, and to live no longer for ourselves alone, but for him who died for us and rose again. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Celebrant and People

Sanctus, S-130, in the Hymnal, F. P. Schubert Setting, arr. R. Proulx
Sung and played by Joshua Charney

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

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

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

Celebrant: Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Memorial Acclamation:

Sung and played by Rob and Deb Lewallen

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. AMEN.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Led by Rob and Deb Lewallen

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those
 who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
 and the power, and the glory,
 for ever and ever. Amen.
The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant: Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Communion Hymn: Eat This Bread, Drink This Cup, Taize Chant
Sung and played by Rob and Deborah Lewallen

Eat this bread, Drink this cup
Come to me and never be hungry

Eat this bread, Drink this cup
Trust in me and you will not thirst

Post Communion Prayer (BCP, page 365)

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction:

Dismissal:

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
People: Thanks be to God!

Closing Hymn: Sweet Hour of Prayer
Played by Stanley Smith on the hammer dulcimer

1 Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
that calls me from a world of care,
and bids me at my Father's throne
make all my wants and wishes known.

In seasons of distress and grief,
my soul has often found relief,
and oft escaped the tempter's snare
by thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

2 Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
the joys I feel, the bliss I share
of those whose anxious spirits burn
with strong desires for thy return!
With such I hasten to the place
where God my Savior shows his face,
and gladly take my station there,
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

3 Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
thy wings shall my petition bear
to him whose truth and faithfulness
engage the waiting soul to bless.
And since he bids me seek his face,
believe his word, and trust his grace,
I'll cast on him my every care,
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!