

September 12, 2021
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 19
St. Mary's-in-the-Valley Episcopal Church
Ramona, CA

Prelude: Bruce Springsteen's, "My City of Ruins,"
Sung and played by Joshua Charney for the anniversary of 9/11

There is a blood red circle
On the cold dark ground
And the rain is falling down
The church door's thrown open
I can hear the organ's song
But the congregation's gone
My city of ruins
My city of ruins

Now the sweet bells of mercy
Drift through the evening trees
Young men on the corner
Like scattered leaves
The boarded up windows
The empty streets
While my brother's down on his knees
My city of ruins
My city of ruins

Come on, rise up! Come on, rise up
Come on, rise up! Come on, rise up
Come on, rise up! Come on, rise up

Now's there's tears on the pillow
Darlin' where we slept
And you took my heart when you left
Without your sweet kiss
My soul is lost, my friend
Tell me how do I begin again?
My city's in ruins
My city's in ruins

Now with these hands
With these hands
With these hands
I pray Lord
With these hands

With these hands
I pray for the strength, Lord
With these hands
With these hands
I pray for the faith, Lord
We pray for your love, Lord
We pray for the lost, Lord
We pray for this world, Lord
We pray for the strength, Lord
We pray for the strength, Lord

Come on
Come on
Come on, rise up
Come on, rise up

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
People And Blessed be God's kingdom now and forever. Amen.

O God, because without you we are not able to please you, mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One.
Have Mercy on us.

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

Collect
Grant us, O Lord, to trust in you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Lord GOD has given me
the tongue of a teacher,

that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens--
wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.

The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.

I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;

I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.

The Lord GOD helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.

It is the Lord GOD who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People
Thanks be to God

Psalm 116:1-8

Dilexi, quoniam

1 I love the LORD, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, *
because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.

- 2 The cords of death entangled me;
the grip of the grave took hold of me; *
I came to grief and sorrow.
- 3 Then I called upon the Name of the LORD: *
"O LORD, I pray you, save my life."
- 4 Gracious is the LORD and righteous; *
our God is full of compassion.
- 5 The LORD watches over the innocent; *
I was brought very low, and he helped me.
- 6 Turn again to your rest, O my soul, *
for the LORD has treated you well.
- 7 For you have rescued my life from death, *
my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling.
- 8 I will walk in the presence of the LORD *
in the land of the living.

James 3:1-12

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue-- a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

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

Mark 8:27-38

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.” And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Then he began to teach them 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:

16 Pentecost Proper 19 September 12, 2021

Isaiah 50: 4-9a. Psalm 116:1-8

James 3:1-12 Mark 8:27-38

The great divide between the Jesus Movement and the dominant party of the synagogues was caused by a disagreement on the understanding of the Messiah.

The recounting of the famous confession of Peter and his misunderstanding which resulted in a rather severe rebuke from Jesus pinpoints this early controversy.

Remember that the Gospels are spiritual manuals which highlight the before and after life of a disciple, before the experience of knowing the presence of the risen Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The early church leaders are trying to come to grips with why many of their fellow Jews did not follow Jesus. Well, even Peter once misunderstood the meaning of the Messiah, and so do lots of other people.

The Messiah of the early church was a suffering servant Messiah, not a king who would come with angelic armies to conquer Palestine and deliver the Jews from Roman rule.

Peter was rebuked for speaking with voice of Satan because of his human understanding of the Messiah. And we can't be too critical of Peter, because we too are all too human as well. We prefer to be with the great winners. We prefer to be Empire Christianity, not suffering and persecuted Christianity.

And historically the church has made quite a shift. Ironically, we as Empire Christianity have been more on the persecuting side than on the persecuted side. Look at the history of slavery and the conquest of indigenous peoples done by Christian Empires.

The human truth is that we are like Peter, we don't really like a suffering servant Messiah. We want to be the ones who have the absolute power to prevent our own suffering, and we are willing to let hurtful things be done by our group of people and country because of wanting to maintain our power position. We have lots of Christians who want to remove the suffering Messiah identity from our current lives. They may say that Jesus died and suffered so we don't have to. Welcome to blessing and prosperity Christianity. If anyone stands in the way of our blessing and prosperity they are persecuting us because God wants us to prosper and be the ones calling the shots.

This kind of Christianity is found in many places in our country today. And many people cannot hear the Risen Christ say, "Get behind me Satan, you are seeing things from a selfish human comfort viewpoint."

It is easy for us to love butterflies and resurrection and try to avoid or forget the cocoon and death phases of life.

We cannot be true to the witness of the early Church, especially to St. Paul, if we try to eliminate the cross of the suffering servant Messiah from our faith.

St. Paul said that he gloried in the cross of Christ. He said that he was crucified with Christ and that he suffered with Christ.

In the field of freedom, the very conditions of God as pure creativity, we have to learn to live with the full range of probabilities in life. And this means we have to learn to integrate loss, death, change, and suffering into our life experience without it destroying us.

And this is where the suffering Messiah and a Cross-centered Christianity comes in; it helps us to be realistic about the conditions in life. The suffering servant Messiah will not let us be naive or pollyannaish about life. Faith is learning how to integrate all of the probabilities of life in a way that makes us better and stronger and in a way that helps us to be those who help the suffering people of the world, rather than be those who cause the suffering of people in this world.

The writer of James gives us a hint about how we can prevent suffering in this life. The tongue is a small muscles but if it is not controlled by a greater inward loving self, it can cause great damage and suffering on a small scale or on a large scale.

On a large scale the tongue represents the worst kind of cruel propaganda against entire races and groups of people. The propaganda of the tongue is what causes the persecution of other people and on a grand scale so that groups of people practice self-justification for their cruelty to others.

On the small scale in our families and micro-communities, an uncontrolled tongue can spew hatred and lies and in subtle ways, not so subtle ways cause havoc in human community.

As much as the writer of James feels compelled to share the horrendous effects of how public communication destroys, we should also work to present what good, loving, just, comforting, instructive, and kind communication can do.

Because the spoken word is so powerful, we should take special care to value the words which we chose publish with our spoken words and with the body language of our lives.

And how can we best use our published words today? With the message of the Gospel of the Messiah. Not a half or partial Messiah. The full Messiah is the suffering servant Messiah who provides us a refuge of identity to integrate the suffering and the death that will surely come to us all in various ways. But the full Messiah is also the Risen Christ, who assures us that death and suffering are not the final events. The Risen Christ is the Gospel of the surpassing experience of life which

includes the faith to integrate in hope everything that can and will happen in God's great field of freedom.

And if we haven't accepted the fact that we're in quite an adventure of varied probabilities in this life, let us do so today, and know that we've taken up our cross and are following Jesus in the path of the continual renewal of our lives. 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

Prayer for Commemorating 9/11
Collect for Holy Cross Day, September 14

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross that he might draw the whole world to himself: Mercifully grant that we, who glory in the mystery of our redemption, may have grace to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

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

Hymn: # 674 Forgive our Sins as We Forgive

Played and sung by Joshua Charney
Forgive our sins as we forgive
You taught us, Lord, to pray,
But you alone can grant us grace
To live the words we say.

How can your pardon reach and bless
The unforgiving heart
That broods on wrongs and will not let
Old bitterness depart?

In blazing light your cross reveals
The truth we dimly knew:
What trivial debts are owed to us;
How great our debt to you!

Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls
And bid resentment cease;
Then, reconciled to God and man
Our lives will spread your peace.

Doxology: Sung by Rob and Deb Lewallen
Eucharistic Prayer B

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 every- where to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who on the first day of the week overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. 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, Sung and played by Joshua Charney

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

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

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have

delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, 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, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People

We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with the ever blessed Virgin Mary, and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

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 forever. *Amen.*

Sung and played by Rob and Deborah 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: Crux Fidelis, Faithful Cross, for Holy Cross Day on September 14th
Played by Joshua Charney

Faithful cross, above all others. One and only noble tree.
None is foliage, none in blossom, none in fruit thy peer may be.
Sweetest wood and sweetest iron.
Sweetest weight was hung on thee

Post Communion Prayer (BCP, page 365)

Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Benediction:

Dismissal:

Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Closing Hymn: Simple Gifts, Shaker tune

Played by Stanley V. Smith, Jr. on the Hammer Dulcimer

'tis a gift to be simple, 'tis a gift to be free
'tis a gift to come down, where we ought to be
And when we find ourselves in the place just right
We be in the valley of love and delight
When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed.
To turn, turn, will be a delight, till turning, turning we come around right.