

Easter 6

[Home](#)

[Up](#)

Prayer of the Day

O God, from whom all good things come: Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to think those things which are right, and by your goodness help us to do them; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Acts 16:9-15

{9} During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." {10} When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. {11} We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, {12} and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. {13} On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. {14} A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. {15} When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

9. During the night Paul had a vision: After having been forbidden by God to preach the word in Asia, in Troas Paul had a vision which would lead to the next stage of the spread of the Gospel, into Europe. Troas is on the coast of Asia Minor (Turkey today); Macedonia is across the Aegean Sea, north of Greece (It is divided between Greece and Yugoslavia today).

11-12: Luke (or whoever he got the itinerary from—note the "we") describes the itinerary for the mission to Macedonia.

11. Troas...Samothrace...Neapolis: Troas was in the mountains on the northwestern coast of Asia Minor. Samothrace is an island in the northern Aegean Sea. Neapolis, "New City," was the seaport for Philippi.

12. Philippi...a leading city...a Roman colony: Philippi is in about the middle of the northern coast of the Aegean Sea. It was neither the capital of Macedonia, Thessalonica, nor the chief city of the district in which it was located (Amphipolis). It was a gold mining center, and a colony of Roman army veterans

13. On the sabbath day...a place of prayer: Paul and his associates continue to observe their customary religious practices as Jews. A "place of prayer" "sometimes denoted a synagogue building; but this is scarcely meant in a town where so few Jews were living." [1]

14. Lydia...a worshipper of God...from the city of Thyatira: Thyatira is mentioned unfavorably in Revelation 2:18: "...you tolerate the woman Jezebel...beguiling my servants...to eat food sacrificed to idols." This practice was a source of contention for Christian Jews. Since the slaughter of animals was always viewed as a sacrifice, eating non-kosher meat implied worship of the god to whom the animal had been sacrificed. Lydia was, if not a Jew (a worshipper of God), then, probably, a proselyte, from Thyatira, the center of the purple dye industry.

Comment. The first lesson next Sunday is Acts 9:16-34.

Psalms 67

{1} May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah {2} that your

way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations. {3} Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. {4} Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah {5} Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. {6} The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us. {7} May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere him.

1: A poetic adaptation of the Aaronic benediction (Numbers 6:24-25).

1, 4. Selah: The word appears 71 times in 39 psalms. It is a performance cue: a pause, repetition, or refrain; a rising pitch or volume; a posture, such as bowing.

3, 5: A refrain. It is not a request for permission, that is, "let the peoples praise you and do not forbid them," but a rubric, a directive to "the peoples" to sing praise to God. The "peoples" are non-Israelites, "the nations." The international character of the Psalm is also seen in verses 2, 4 and 7. "All the ends of the earth" are admonished to revere God.

Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

{10} And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.... {22} I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. {23} And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. {24} The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. {25} Its gates will never be shut by day--and there will be no night there. {26} People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. {27} But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.... {22:1} Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb {2} through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. {3} Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; {4} they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. {5} And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

22. I saw no temple in the city.... And the city has no need of sun or moon: While the earthly temple was often thought of as a reflection of the heavenly temple, there will be no temple in the new Jerusalem because the Almighty and the Lamb will be the temple. And they will provide all the light that is necessary, so there will be no need for the sun and the moon. Whatever the new order of being involves it will be fundamentally different from the present order of creation. See also 22:5 with reference to the sun.

25. Its gates will never be shut: The description of the new Jerusalem continues: its gates will be open during the day, but since there will be no night, they will always be open.

27. nothing unclean...practices abomination or falsehood: It is not that these will be kept out by some police authority, but that they will no longer exist.

the Lamb's book of life: Those whose names are written in "the book of life" will not be harmed (Revelation 13:8; 17:8; 20:15). Their deeds are recorded in it (Revelation 20:12), and they will be judged by that record. If they "conquer" their names will not be blotted out of the book.

22:1. the river of the water of life...flowing from the throne of God: See Ezekiel 47:1ff. God is the source of life and that life-giving power is associated with water which also has life-giving properties. In Ezekiel it flows out of the temple; here it flows from the very throne of God and of the Lamb.

2. On either side of the river is the tree of life: The tree of life is in the creation-garden and access to it is prevented to the earthlings who had disobeyed God in the garden (Genesis 2-33).

On either side of the river...with its twelve kinds of fruit: The single tree of life in Genesis is now twelve trees with twelve kinds of fruit, one for each month (see Ezekiel 47:12).

4. *they will see his face*: "His" is a collective pronoun for "God and the Lamb," who are viewed as a singular entity with a double appearance. This is one of those ironic inversions: "no one has ever seen God," until now; in the new Jerusalem those whose names are written in the book of life *will* see his face, while Jesus being, born in human form, has died. *and his name will be on their foreheads*: The marking foreheads of the servants of God is anticipated in Revelation 7:3; the 144,000 are so marked (Revelation 14:1). Behind this is the protective sign God put on Cain (Genesis 4:15). Tattoos and other cuttings or markings are used by some groups to identify themselves, or to assure safe passage through life.

John 14:23-29

{23} Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. {24} Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me. {25} "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. {26} But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. {27} Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. {28} You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. {29} And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.

23. *Jesus answered him*: Jesus is answering the question posed in verse 22: "Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?" "It follows from this remark that the Johannine community knew itself to be a 'closed community' more or less." [2]

23-24: "Jesus response here is that if anyone in Israel seeks to see him, all that person must do is show love for Jesus by keeping his word (presumably all Jesus said in John 2-12). Then the Father and Jesus will 'make our home' with them (v. 23).... Thus, Jesus manifests himself to Israel (the world). The problem is that 'the world' does not love Jesus because it does not keep his word and therefore does not hear the Father who sent Jesus (v. 24)." [3]

26. *the Advocate, the Holy Spirit: Parakletos*, "Paraclete," in Greek. The Advocate has many roles; here it is that the authoritative teacher sent by the Father. The substance of the Advocate's instruction will be everything Jesus has already said to them.

27. *Peace I leave with you*: "Here 'peace' is a virtual equivalent of 'truth,' 'light,' 'life,' and other terms in John's antilanguage [4] that describe the group's quality of life." [5]

28. *If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father*: If the disciples truly "love" Jesus, that is, if they are truly committed to his way, then they will rejoice that he is following the way his Father has determined for him. "going to the Father" is a statement of Jesus' credentials, with the added information that, as great as Jesus may be, the Father is greater.

29. *Now I have told you...so that when it does occur*: Now the disciples know the plan, so they should not be surprised or dismayed when they see it played taking place.

Or John 5:1-9

{1} After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. {2} Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. {3} In these lay many invalids--blind, lame, and paralyzed. {4} {5} One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. {6} When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" {7} The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me." {8} Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." {9} At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a sabbath.

1. *a festival of the Jews*...9. *...a sabbath*: The festival is not identified. It "is mentioned only

in order to get Jesus to Jerusalem for the purpose of making an important speech." [6]

4. *"for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was made well from whatever disease that person had":* "Ver. 4 is a gloss...." [7] In a compact statement the gloss described the circumstances which are referred to obliquely in verse 7.

9. *At once the man was made well:* After long years of ineffectual waiting for a miraculous cure, the man is cured simply and quickly by Jesus' word.

Now that day was a sabbath: Since the next verses, which are concerned with the violation of Sabbath law, were not included in the reading, the last sentence should probably be left out also. The point of the reading within the Gospel of John, that in doing what the Father has given him to do Jesus is not bound by traditions concerning what activities were allowed on the Sabbath, is changed so that the point that is made is that Jesus is a more compassionate healer than the impersonal waters of the pool.

Reflection

In John 14:23-29 Jesus says that he is about to leave his disciples, but that the Father will send Holy Spirit to remind them of what he has told them. God's Spirit is among us to "call, gather, enlighten and sanctify the whole Christian church on earth." As we carry out the mission and ministry God has given us we know that God will bless those to whom we are sent with faith.

The alternative Gospel, John 5:1-9 show Jesus' concern and care for those who are imprisoned, whether by illness or sin or, by implication, any power or force which oppresses them. The goal of our ministries, too, is to set God's people free.

Hymns [8]

With One Voice (e.g. 762v), *Hymnal Supplement* 1991 (e.g. 725s) and *LBW* (e.g. 32).

E=Entrance; D=Hymn of the Day; I=First Lesson, P=Psalm; II=Second Lesson; G=Gospel

262 --E--Savior, Again to
299 --D--Dear Christians, One
750s --D--O Holy Spirit,
335 --P--May God Bestow
331 --II--Jerusalem, My Happy

347 --II--Jerusalem the Golden
816s --II--I Want to
--II--672v, 690v, 668v
680v --G--O Spirit of Life
338, 749s/686v, 502, 792v

Prayers of the People [9]

P or A: When Jesus left this world, he promised the gift of the Spirit. We pray "Christ is risen" and respond joyfully by saying "He is risen indeed".

A: Holy God, pour out your Spirit upon the church that we might be filled with your life-giving love which leads us to work for justice and peace. Christ is risen! Christ...

A: God of light, your righteousness shines brightly in a world of darkness. Guide our young people as they walk through this world. Preserve them from trusting in empty hopes and promises, and let your Word lead them ever closer to you. Christ is risen! Christ...

A: God of renewal, inspire the worship of this congregation that we might experience your presence anew each time we gather. Move musicians to play joyfully, readers to read your word with faith, preachers to lead us in reflection, and those who contemplate in silence to do so with quiet vigour. Christ is risen! Christ...

A: God of faith, bless this congregation with gifts that enable us to serve you –the ability to teach your Word, the willingness to give of our time and possessions to those in need, and the desire and ability to pray. In areas where we feel lack, help us to envision opportunities

for growth in faith. Christ is risen! Christ...

A: God of comfort, be with the sick and the lonely, especially _____ and those whom we name in our hearts... Christ is risen! Christ...

P: We pray in confidence that you, our merciful Father, hear the words of our lips and the longings of our hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Or [10]

Presider or deacon

Jesus came into the world to give us peace. Let us offer prayers to God for all whose hearts are troubled and afraid.

Deacon or other leader

For this holy gathering and for those who enter our circle of faith.

For *NN* and the newly baptized illumined by the light of Christ.

For all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

For the leaders of the nations and for all who seek peace.

For the suffering peoples of the world.

For all those in danger and need, the sick and the suffering, prisoners, captives, and the families, the hungry, homeless, and oppressed. and for those who feel remote from God.

For the dying and the dead.

For ourselves, our families, and those we love.

Remembering our most glorious and blessed Virgin Mary, *N*, and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

To you, O Lord.

Presider

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth, who gives us the water of life. Hear our prayers for all peoples and bring us at last to your holy city Jerusalem. Glory to you for ever and ever.

Notes

[1] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1998, p. 585.

[2] Ernst Haenchen, *John 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of John Chapters 7-21*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984, p. 127.

[3] Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998, p. 232.

[4] "...antisocieties ['a society that is set up within another society as a conscious alternative to it' Malina, p. 7)...are inclined to develop in-group languages all their own... ordinary terms from the ordinary language of the larger society...special in-group meanings that are understood only by insiders." Malina, p. 46.

[5] Malina, *Loc. cit.*

[6] Ernst Haenchen, *John 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of John Chapters 1-6*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984, p. 243.

[7] Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1975, p. 209.

[8] <http://www.worship.on.ca/text/rclc0001.txt>

[9] http://www.worship.on.ca/text/inter_c.txt

[10] <http://members.cox.net/oplater/prayer.htm>