

Trinity Sunday



June 10, 2001

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God our Father, dwelling in majesty and mystery, renewing and fulfilling creation by your eternal Spirit, and revealing your glory through our Lord, Jesus Christ: Cleanse us from doubt and fear, and enable us to worship you, with your Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, living and reigning, now and forever.

Or

Almighty and ever-living God, you have given us grace, by the confession of the true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and , in the power of your divine majesty, to worship the unity. Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your eternal glory, one God, now and forever.

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

{1} Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding rise her voice? {2} On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; {3} beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: {4} "To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live. {22} The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. {23} Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. {24} When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. {25} Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth-- {26} when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil. {27} When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, {28} when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, {29} when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, {30} then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, {31} rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

22. *The Lord created me:* Hebrew *qanah*. It usually means, "acquire, possess what has been acquired" (e.g., Gen xlvii 22). Yahweh's attribute of wisdom existed prior to its expression in his acts of creation. Yahweh possessed wisdom as an attribute or faculty integral to his being from the very first, and in [with, or by] his wisdom founded the earth." [1]

the first of his acts of long ago: Yahweh's first act of creation was wisdom. The search for wisdom is the search for these first principles which govern the way in which the creation is formed, and by which all human relationships are managed.

23-31: Wisdom was present "like a master worker" at all the stages of creation, delighting Yahweh, and rejoicing in the world and its inhabitants including the human race.

Psalm 8

{1} O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory

above the heavens. {2} Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. {3} When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; {4} what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? {5} Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. {6} You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, {7} all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, {8} the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. {9} O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

1. *Sovereign*: The Hebrew word is *Adonai*, a word used both of God and humans to indicate their authority. The use of this title emphasizes that Yahweh is the Lord of creation, the Ruler of the created order, the Sovereign of heaven and earth and everything in them.

2: There is nothing else in the Bible like this verse. It seems to mean that God is so powerful that the inarticulate sounds of a baby used by God can defeat foes and silence enemies. In other words, Yahweh needs nothing from human beings to prevail, and yet in verse 4, he is known to be mindful and caring toward them.

3: The wonder of the heavens and the heavenly bodies overwhelm the psalmist when he considers how insignificant human beings are in comparison.

4. *what are human beings that you are mindful of them*: The question is not answered directly, but the place of humankind in the creation is described. See Psalm 144:3-4 for another view: "They are like a breath; their days are like a passing shadow."

5. *you have made them little lower than God*: The Hebrew word for "God" is *elohim*, the plural form of the Semitic *el*, the generic word for God. Some would translate it "angels" here, perhaps in keeping with the translation in Hebrews 2:7. Human beings were created in the "image" and "likeness" of God, so they are very much like God.

crowned them with glory and honor: These words convey both the intention of God and the irony of the tragic reality of humanity.

6-8: Genesis 1:26-30 is in the background. The dominion given to mortals is to act as Yahweh's agent on behalf of the creation. Humans are little lower than God, and are loved and honored by him. The creation is little lower than humans, and they should act toward it as Yahweh acts toward them. That is, they may use it and its creatures, but they should not abuse it.

Romans 5:1-5

{1} Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, {2} through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. {3} And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, {4} and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, {5} and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

1. *we are justified by faith*: Israel had been chosen by Yahweh. And Israel could never escape being chosen, not even by sin. Israel and each Israelite was chosen. God made other arrangements for the nations. Because they were not chosen they were unclean. Their hereditary impurity has been overcome by the sacrifice of Christ, and can only be received by faith, an act by which they are united with Christ and God.

peace with God: "the positive OT sense of *shalom*, the fullness of right relationship that is implicit in justification itself and of all the other bounties that flow from it. See Isa 32:17, the effect of uprightness will be peace, and the result of uprightness, quiet

and trust forever." [2]

2. *we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God*: Gentile believers cannot boast that their race was chosen, nor can they boast in their righteousness, nevertheless they can boast in the grace they have received so they may share the glory of God.

3-5. *sufferings* *endurance* *character* *hope* *love*: "Once justified, the Christian is reconciled to God and experiences a peace that distressing troubles cannot upset, a hope that knows no disappointment, and a confidence that salvation is assured. For not only has God's uprightness been manifested toward humanity, but now his love is poured into hearts through the holy Spirit that is given to human beings." [3] The Holy Spirit is both the evidence of God's love and the means by which God pours his love into our hearts.

6-8. while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person--though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. *while we were enemies*: The full glory and horror of what God has done in Christ is expressed in these two verses. To sacrifice one's life, even for a deserving person, is a rare act. Christ did not die for the righteous (for the chosen), but for the weak, ungodly, sinners, us. And so he proved his love for us. We were weak and ungodly, sinners and enemies when Christ died for us as an expression of God's love. This is not what we would expect of ourselves or each other, or even of God. We would expect him to be angry and vengeful. God deals with his people in ways we have no right to expect or competence to predict. In our relationship with God the initiative is all with God. God does not act in response to our righteousness, nor in response to our sin. Instead he acts from his love for his people. Human relations, personal relationships, even ecclesiastical relationships require reciprocity between the two parties. Fortunately for us, our relationship with God is built on stronger stuff. See also Romans 4:5.

John 16:12-15{12}

{12} I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. {13} When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. {14} He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. {15} All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

The word wisdom is not used in the Gospel of John, but we are reminded of the place of the Logos, the Word, in creation (John 1:3). The Gospel declares that the Spirit enables us to work within the structure of creation and redemption because the Spirit reminds, teaches, guides us in understanding God's work in Christ for our salvation. The Spirit enables us to understand what the Father and the Son have already set in motion. See also John 14:25-26.

Reflection

The festival of Trinity was established by Pope John XXII (d. 1334) as the octave of Pentecost. It "provides a fitting climax to the first half of the year and lends a dogmatic foundation to the Sundays in the second half with their messages concerning the teaching of our Lord as exemplified in the life of the church." [4] The lessons in the RCL have all been newly chosen to clarify the unity of the intention and purpose of the

Godhead expressed in different ways by Father, Son and Spirit.

God has created human beings to be lower than the heavenly beings (or God himself), and to have mastery over the earthly creation. In the light of the first lesson that mastery is to exercised by God's wisdom by which the creation was made, not human wisdom which is concerned only with how the creation can be used to serve our selfish desires.

In the second lesson "Paul now proceeds from the question of salvation and justification to the consequences of faith in Christ Jesus. Whereas humanity left to itself without the gospel came only under the wrath of God, through the gospel and through the grace of God that it proclaims humanity now finds justification, redemption, expiation, and pardon of its sins. Paul now explains how, as a result of such justification and salvation, human beings are at peace with God, and now God's love further manifests itself toward them." [5]

Hymns [6]

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

317 --E--To God the
284 --D--Creator Spirit,
688v --I--O Holy Spirit
701s --P--Psalm 8: How
794v --P--Many and Great
163 --II--Come, Holy Ghost,

257 --G--Holy Spirit, Truth
475 --G--Come, Gracious Spirit,
687v --G--Gracious Spirit
167, 392, 354, 168
717v, 757v, 787v, 769v

Prayers of the People [7]

P or A: We pray that we may filled with the Spirit of God, learning wisdom, love, and justice as we grow in grace. We pray "Send us your Spirit, Lord" and respond "Come, Holy Spirit."

A: For the wisdom to discern your will from our own, that we may not be tempted to sin, but to follow in the ways which lead to everlasting life. Send us your Spirit, Lord. Come...

A: For the ability to love all that you have made, that we may be inspired to maintain a right relationship with waters, mountains, forests, and all of their creatures. Send us your Spirit, Lord. Come...

A: For the desire for justice we pray, O God. Move us to share our wealth with the homeless, the hungry, and the oppressed. Send us your Spirit, Lord. Come...

A: For your grace, O God, which alone enables a justifying and redeeming faith, give us thankful hearts. Help us to live as your redeemed people. Send us your Spirit, Lord. Come...

A: For the sick and the suffering, that they might find peace in you. For _____ we pray. Send us your Spirit, Lord. Come...

A: For the people of this congregation, that they may walk in truth, united in God and by God with one another. Send us your Spirit, Lord. Come...

P: In a spirit of unity, we lift up these prayers to you, our Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or [8]

Presider or deacon

Bound together in Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us pray with one heart and mind to God our Father.

Deacon or other leader

For peace from on high and for our salvation.

For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all.

For this holy gathering and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and fear of God.

For *N* our bishop and the presbyters, the deacons and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people.

For all those in danger and need: the suffering and the oppressed, travelers and prisoners, 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, O Lord our God, who created all things by your eternal Word. Hear the prayers we offer this day and breathe upon us with your Spirit. Glory to you for ever and ever.

Notes

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[1] R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1965, p. 73.

[2] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993, p. 393.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 394.

[4] Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1947, p. 519.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 393.

[6] <http://www.worship.on.ca/text/rc1c0001.txt>

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

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