



This week we return to a central pillar of our faith, and one that must inform all that we do as we seek to follow Christ – the idea that life is eternal, that God saves, and that resurrection emerges from death. This is, of course, more than just an idea, but is a lived experience as we face death in all its forms and manifestations in our world, and as we cling to the hope that the Gospel offers us. Without the hope of life, of resurrection, it is pretty much impossible to remain committed and effective in dreaming of and working towards a more peaceful and just world.

May we be filled and empowered again by resurrection life in our worship this week.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Haggai 1:15b-2:9: God comforts the returning exiles as they grieve the loss of former glory, and face the reality of a new, simpler, less prosperous and glamorous life. God's presence is assured, and a promise of future glory is offered as comfort and inspiration.

OR Job 19:23-27a: Job affirms his faith that God will ultimately defend, justify and restore him, in spite of the accusations of his friends.

The Psalm

Psalm 145:1-5, 17-21: God is worthy of praise, fair and faithful, and always near to, and protective of, those who love and trust God.

OR Psalm 98: A song of praise inviting all creation to celebrate God's salvation and mercy.

OR Psalm 17:1-9: A prayer for God's protection and justification based on the innocence and obedience of the one praying.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17: Paul addresses the rumour-mongering and fear of the church, assuring them of God's love and salvation, and their secure hope in Christ.

The Gospel Reading

Luke 20:27-38: Jesus is confronted by the Sadducees about life after death, using the story of a woman who, through Levirate marriage, is married to seven brothers consecutively. He responds with an affirmation of resurrection, proclaiming that God is the God of the living, not of the dead.

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=%0AHaggai%201:%2015b%20-%202:%209%0A%2BOR%0AJob%2019:23-27a%0Acw%20Psalm%20145:%201-5,18-22%0A%2BOR%0APsalm%2098%0A%2BOR%0APsalm%2017:1-9%0A2%20Thessalonians%202:%201-5,13-17%0ALuke%2020:%2027-38

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COLLECTS OF THE DAY

O Lord, we beseech thee,
absolve thy people from their offences;
that through thy bountiful goodness
we may all be delivered from the bonds of those sins,
which by our frailty we have committed;
Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake,
our blessed Lord and Saviour.

Almighty Father,
whose will is to restore all things
in your beloved Son, the king of all:
Govern the hearts and minds of those in authority,
and bring the families of the nations,
divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin,
to be subject to his just and gentle rule;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Presider or deacon

Standing firm and holding fast, let us offer prayers to God who proclaims to us the good news of Christ.

Deacon or other leader

For N our bishop and N our presbyter, for this holy gathering, and for the people of God in every place.

Lord, have mercy.

For mercy, justice, and peace among all peoples.

Lord, have mercy.

For good weather, abundant fruits of the earth, and peaceful times.

Lord, have mercy.

For our *city* and those who live in it, and for all those we love.

Lord, have mercy.

For all those in danger and need: the sick and the suffering, prisoners, captives, and their families, the hungry, homeless, and oppressed.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who rest in Christ and for all the dead.

Lord, have mercy.

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For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need.

Lord, have mercy.

Lifting our voices with all creation, with the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. To you, O Lord.

Presider

God of all creation, to whom the living and the dead are all alive, hear the prayers we offer this day and direct our hearts to love and steadfastness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

POST COMMUNION

God of peace,
whose Son Jesus Christ proclaimed the kingdom
and restored the broken to wholeness of life:
Look with compassion on the anguish of the world,
and by your healing power
make whole both people and nations;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

PRAYERS

God of faithful surprises,
throughout the ages
you have made known your love and power
in unexpected ways and places.
May we daily perceive
the joy and wonder of your abiding presence
and offer our lives in gratitude
for our redemption. Amen.

God of life, we praise you for your abiding presence
from generation to generation,
blessing your people,
strengthening us to lives of service,
empowering us to witness.
Hear the prayers we offer on behalf of your creation.

Prayers of the People, concluding with:

Grant that as we serve you now on earth,
so we may one day rejoice with all the saints
in your kingdom of light and peace,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God,
you hold all the powers of the universe within your hands,
and we are your children.
Turn us to the splendor of life in you,

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transforming us through Jesus Christ our Savior,
and strengthening us in every good deed and word. Amen.

Eternally righteous God,
merciful judge of all the living,
in your love you called us
to share the glory of Christ.
Strengthen our hearts in every good work and word,
that we may be steadfast in your ways
and always believe your truth. Amen.

LECTIONARY NOTES

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

Although the passages this week appear to be completely unrelated, there is, nevertheless, a thread that runs through all of the readings. In the face of difficulties – exile, persecution, and even death – God gives God’s people the assurance of God’s protection and salvation. The returning exiles are assured that God is with them and will restore their temple beyond its former glory (which, historically, motivated them to continue working on the temple for centuries!). Job, in the face of his accusers, pleads his innocence and affirms his faith in God’s justification and restoration. The Psalmists celebrate God’s mercy and salvation and plead, in faith, for God’s deliverance. Paul reassures the Thessalonian church that they have not been abandoned or left behind by God, but are guaranteed God’s love and a place in God’s eternal realm. Finally, Jesus, in the face of the Sadducees’ taunts, reaffirms the resurrection, and that even in death we are not separated from God and God’s life.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: While the promise of an afterlife has sometimes been used as an excuse for oppression or a reason to keep away from engagement in justice issues in the world, the truth is that the hope we have in Christ is more often a motivator to work toward that hope in this life. If our work to bring about a more peaceful, equitable society has no hope of success – which is the case if it depends only on us – then we will ultimately find ourselves growing cynical and disheartened, and falling into a “if you can’t beat them, join them” view. If, however, we can nurture our faith in God’s purposes, God’s life and God’s resurrection, we find hope. Our efforts are not ours alone, but are inspired and empowered by God’s Spirit, and at some point – even if only in a distant future – the work we do now will result in the world of which we dream. And, further, the life we live and to which we contribute now, lives on beyond the grave. So, what we do does matter, and every small act of mercy, compassion and defense of the most vulnerable is a manifestation of God’s life. We are participants in God’s work of resurrecting the universe! Once we allow this truth to sink into our souls, we begin to engage the world’s systems from a different, less desperate, more confident and compassionate place. Ultimately, in all of the world’s most effective activists this irrepressible hope is visible. As followers of Christ, how much more should this hope characterise us?

LOCAL APPLICATION: It takes tremendous courage and faith to live an alternative set of values and practices from the people around us. Unfortunately, though, our world has somehow become captured by short-term, expedient values – the quarterly report, the next new product or experience, the quick gratification. Long term hope, and the commitment to work and wait for the greater good are somehow seen as quaint but

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outdated ways of living. In our churches we can fall into exactly the same trap – measuring our success by numbers, money, buildings, new fashions, new trends and new equipment. When this happens, our message is lost, and the call for justice is silenced. When we renew our faith in the eternal, in the unending life of God, and in our hope of resurrection, all sorts of things change. We begin to view the world and its history through the lens of God's reign, and the wide sweep of salvation history, rather than just the immediate moment. We begin to work for a better world, even though we may never see the fulfilment of our dreams ourselves. We grow in our commitment to make short term sacrifices in favour of long term justice and peace. Ultimately this faith enables us to change what we drive and how we use energy – even though it may be less convenient – to protect our planet. It enables us to give up our short term needs and hurts in favour of long term relationship building – even with those we may consider enemies. It enables us to sacrifice some of our own comfort in the short term – to buy less, consume less and throw away less – in order to ensure that there is enough to go around, and that what we use is justly and fairly sourced and produced. Hope in the resurrection – in God's eternal gift of life and salvation – really does inspire us to live differently, if we will only allow it to capture our hearts and souls

SERMON OUTLINE

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"The Way of Truth, Hope and Love," the Rev. J. Barrington Bates, Sermons that Work, Episcopal Digital Network

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2013/10/19/25-pentecost-proper-27-c-2013/>

The Way of Truth, The Righteous live by their faith, Susan Butterworth. Sermons that Work, Episcopal Digital Network

Scroll down at -

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2016/?cat=9>

Jesus Says Everything Is Small Stuff, Except..." The Rev. Robert Naylor (UCC), Day1,

<http://day1.org/5233-jesus-says-everything-is-small-stuff-except>

Stewardship Sermons, Pastor Edward F. Markquart, Grace Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington.

<http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/stewardship.htm>

CHILDREN

Worshiping with Children, Proper 27, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown

<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2013/10/year-c-proper-26-31st-sunday-in.html>

"An Opportunity to Share Good News," On the Chancel Steps, children's resources by Frances Woodruff

<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2013/11/05/news/>

"Cheering for Us," Children's Sabbath, On the Chancel Steps, children's resources by Frances Woodruff

<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2013/10/31/cheer/>

www.churchnewsireland.org

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HYMN SUGGESTIONS

There's A Light Upon The Mountains
O For a Thousand Tongues To Sing
O Spirit Of The Living God
We Shall Go Out With Hope Of Resurrection
Sing With All The Saints In Glory
There's A Light (Upon The Mountains)
Everlasting God (YouTube video)
Hosanna (Link to YouTube video)
Lord Of The Dance (YouTube video)
Shine Jesus Shine (ouTube video)