

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity YEAR C September 11. 2016

The concept of repentance is a tad unfashionable these days, but justice cannot be achieved without it, and worship becomes shallow for lack of it. It's easy to denounce the "godless" as "foolish" and to point fingers at those who bring injustice and suffering into the world, but if we're honest, we are them – the same darkness in them dwells in us. This means we have at least two responses to make: 1) We must face our own "lostness" and repent, opening ourselves to God's transforming grace and 2) We must offer grace and transformation to those with whom we disagree and even those we find shocking, wrong or evil. This work of justice and worship is not for the faint-hearted!

May our worship lead us into true repentance – the starting place of justice in our own hearts – this week.

INTRODUCTIONS

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

Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28: God proclaims judgement on God's foolish people, who are skilled at evil, but have no knowledge of doing good, and the land is destroyed in the wake of God's anger.

OR **Exodus 32:7-14**: As the people worship the golden calf, God threatens to destroy them, but Moses pleads on their behalf, reminding God of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and God relents.

Psalms 14: Foolish people say there is no God and live in destructive ways, but God's people hope in God's salvation and the joy it will bring.

OR **Psalms 51:1-10**: David's prayer of repentance, asking for God's forgiveness, cleansing and restoration after his adultery with Bathsheba.

1 Timothy 1:12-17: Paul celebrates God's mercy in that God forgave him and empowered him for ministry, in spite of his sinfulness and ignorance.

Luke 15:1-10: Jesus explains his friendship with 'sinners' using the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin – where celebration is inspired by the lost thing being found again.

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

O Lord, we beseech thee,
let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church;
and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour,
preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect Two

O Lord,
Hear the prayers of your people who call upon you;
and grant that they may both perceive and know
what things they ought to do,
and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord God, help us in our choices to serve you and you alone. Forbid that we would seek a lesser god. Help us understand that you permit no one but you, as Lord and Master of our souls.

Loving Christ: **Help us share the faith.**

Heavenly Father, we are clay in your hands. You took us from the earth and made us real human beings, made in your likeness, after your image. Use us as you see fit.

Loving Christ: **Help us share the faith.**

Holy Spirit, you despise the light chaff which the wind drives away, because we were created in the solid image of God. Help us walk in the counsel of the Lord.

Loving Christ: **Help us share the faith.**

Holy Spirit, as we try to walk in the path of the Lord, remind us that we were knit together, by you, in our mother's womb, and you claim us as your own creation.

Loving Christ: **Help us share the faith.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you make slavery obsolete when you make us brothers and sisters, one to another, even as we are brothers and sisters to you.

Loving Christ: **Help us share the faith.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you require an allegiance way beyond our imagination. Unless you help us carry the cross, we cannot accomplish the cost of discipleship. We give you what we can, trusting in your mercy to forgive our lack of total surrender.

Loving Christ: **Help us share the faith.**

Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that you will accept our meagre response to your hard commands. Remember, we are but facsimiles of your holy image.

Loving Christ: **Help us share the faith.**

We name before you those who need you for health restoration. We know each of them by name, as do you, so hear us as we name each, one by one _____.

Loving Christ: **Help us share the faith.**

Listening God, hear our prayers. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

God of mercy,
through our sharing in this holy sacrament
you make us one body in Christ.
Fashion us in his likeness here on earth,
that we may share his glorious company in heaven,
where he lives and reigns now and for ever.

PRAYERS

God of power and justice,
like Jeremiah you weep over those
who wander from you,
turn aside to other gods,
and enter into chaos and destruction.
By your tears and through your mercy,
teach us your ways
and write them on our hearts
so that we may follow faithfully
the path you show us. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we are to pray and to give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Common Worship*

God of constant mercy, who sent your Son to save us: remind us of your goodness, increase your grace within us, that our thankfulness may grow, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen *Common Worship Shorter Collect*

Merciful God, grant that your Church, being gathered by your Holy Spirit into one, may reveal your glory among all peoples, to the honour of your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen *Methodist Worship*

Holy God, you liberate the oppressed and make a way of salvation. Unite us with all who cry for justice and lead us together into freedom; through our Lord and Liberator, Jesus Christ. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

Holy God, you liberate the oppressed and make a way of salvation. Unite us with all who cry for justice and lead us together into freedom; through our Lord and Liberator, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let your love fall upon the altar of our hearts,
O Lord, as fire from heaven.
Teach us to guard and cherish its holy flame. Strengthen our souls and kindle your love within our cold hearts that we may walk before you as pilgrims eager to reach their celestial home; through Christ our Lord. Amen *Gerhard Teersteegen, 1697-1769*

Friends in Christ,
God invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers
as dear to us as our own needs.
Loving our neighbours as ourselves,
we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions
on behalf of the church and the world.
Hear our prayers, God of power,
and through the ministry of your Son
free us from the grip of the tomb,

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity YEAR C September 11. 2016

that we may desire you as the fullness of life
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

As you heard the prayer of Isaac and Rebekah, O God,
and guided them in the way of your love,
so listen now to those who call upon you.
Move us to praise your gracious will,
for in Christ Jesus you have saved us from the deeds of death
and opened for us the hidden ways of your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God, friend of those in need,
your Son Jesus has untied our burdens
and healed our spirits.
We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened,
those seeking healing,
those in need within the church and the world.
Hear our prayers
that we may love you with our whole being
and willingly share the concerns of our neighbors. Amen.

Creator God,
you call us to love and serve you
with body, mind, and spirit
through loving your creation
and our sisters and brothers.
Open our hearts in compassion
and receive these petitions
on behalf of the needs of the church and the world.

Holy One,
hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards
of the fragile bounty of this earth
so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven. Amen.

We praise your abiding guidance, O God,
for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah,
to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.
We offer these prayers of love
on behalf of ourselves and our neighbors,
on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures.
Loving God,
open our ears to hear your word
and draw us closer to you,
that the whole world may be one with you
as you are one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of mercy and healing,
you who hear the cries of those in need,
receive these petitions of your people
that all who are troubled
may know peace, comfort, and courage.

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity YEAR C September 11. 2016

Life-giving God,
heal our lives,
that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds
and offer you thanks from generation to generation
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of salvation,
who sent your Son to seek out and save what is lost,
hear our prayers
on behalf of those who are lost in our day,
receiving these petitions and thanksgivings
with your unending compassion.
Redeeming Sustainer,
visit your people
and pour out your strength and courage upon us,
that we may hurry to make you welcome
not only in our concern for others,
but by serving them
generously and faithfully in your name. Amen.

Merciful God,
your desire to bring us into your commonwealth
is so great that you seek us
in the places of our ignorance,
and the forgotten corners where we hide in despair.
Gather us into your loving embrace,
and pour upon us your wise and holy Spirit,
so that we may become faithful servants
in whom you rejoice with all the company of heaven. Amen.

Persistently forgiving God,
we are a stiff-necked and stubborn people
who try your patience;
yet, instead of giving us up for lost,
you seek us out until we return to you.
Break our willfulness
and bring us back from our wanderings;
bend our pride and create in us pure and faithful hearts,
which rejoice in your forgiveness
made known through Jesus Christ. Amen.

LECTIONARY NOTES

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

Much of the destruction and evil in our world is the result of ignorance and the failure to recognise God's presence and purpose – so say the Lectionary readings this week. The suffering and injustice that this causes is an offense to God that arouses God's anger (Jeremiah, Exodus and Psalm 1) but, God is gracious, seeking out what is lost – as in Jesus' parables in Luke's Gospel – and healing, restoring and forgiving those who have done wrong (as in David's Psalm and Paul's letter to Timothy). More than this, God so

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity YEAR C September 11. 2016

changes those on whom God pours God's grace that they become agents of God's grace and healing to others – as Paul testified about himself.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: The suffering that is depicted in this week's readings is still so prevalent in our world today. The ignorance and destructiveness of human folly touches millions of lives every day, and God is still angered by this. As followers of Christ we cannot stand by and watch silently. As the old saying goes, "evil prospers when good people do nothing." Our hearts must be broken by what breaks God's heart (to quote another profound, if over-used, saying), and we must become God's voice for justice and righteousness in our communities and nations. Essentially this means that we need to participate in our society and its systems and structures in order to be agents of change. It is an act of faith and love to sign petitions and join in peaceful protest. It is an act of following Christ to vote for those who best represent the justice we seek and to hold them accountable. It is an act of discipleship to write letters to editors and to leaders, and to challenge the practices of the powerful in politics and in business. We are called to engage and challenge. But at the same time, we are called to be people of grace, forgiveness and restoration. Ours is the tough task of hope – in God's work and in the possibility for people to change. Ours is the gracious calling to seek justice that restores, not justice that dehumanises through punishment, vengeance and excessive restitution. How can you embrace this two-sided work today?

LOCAL APPLICATION: The word 'lost' has come to mean those who are not part of the church, or who don't believe in Christ as we do, but in the biblical sense, there are still many lost people in the Church. If we're honest, we all have parts of us that are lost, and we all need to be found more and more. In the light of this, our calling in Christ is to confront the foolishness, ignorance and evil within ourselves, and allow Christ to find, save and transform us. It's a tough and challenging thing to acknowledge the places where we are unjust or destructive, and to do the work of repentance in order to be changed, but if this is not an integral part of our calling to be people of justice, then what is? Then, we are able to become agents of God's grace and justice, working alongside the weak, the poor, the marginalised, the excluded and the oppressed, while confronting, challenging and even inspiring the strong, the wealthy, the inclusive and the oppressor. The tough questions, then, this week are these: Where do we still need to confront injustice and "lostness" in ourselves? and In what ways can we offer ourselves to be agents of healing, grace and change in our communities?

SERMON OUTLINE

Luke 15: 1-10 coming near to listen to him

- famous parable told by Jesus to illustrate the *joy in heaven over one sinner who repents*.. The concept of shepherding was dear to Jesus' heart – knew so well the Shepherd Psalm (23); described himself as the Good Shepherd; knew all about shepherds & sheep... So then ⁴*Which one of you, having a hundred sheep & losing one of them what would you do? Be like Little Bo Peep?*

***Little Bo peep has lost her sheep
And doesn't know where to find them.
Leave them alone and they'll come home,
Bringing their tails behind them.*** But will they come?

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity YEAR C September 11. 2016

1. The sheep was Foolish:- can you imagine it – moving from 1 piece of pasture to another – without realising it was moving further away from the flock & the shepherd? Cf humans – as we wander away from God – **BCP General Confession** – *erred & strayed like lost sheep...*

2. The sheep was Forlorn – as it realised it was lost – out in the open – at risk from wild animals & robbers.. Imagine it bleating in the hope that it would be found!

3. The sheep was Found:- Thankfully the shepherd took the initiative – he will *leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?* Imagine his joy & relief *when he has found it.* Then *he lays it on his shoulders & rejoices.* ⁶ *when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost*

there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

By Norman Porteous

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"Repeatedly lost, repeatedly found," the Rev. Charles Hoffacker, Sermons that Work, Episcopal Digital Network
<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2013/08/27/17-pentecost-proper-19-c-2013/>

"[Quitting Ain't An Option!](http://day1.org/1060-quitting_aint_an_option)" the Rev. Dr. Leslie Holmes, Day 1
http://day1.org/1060-quitting_aint_an_option

"Room at the Table," the Rev. Dr. James Barnette, Day 1
http://day1.org/5216-room_at_the_table

CHILDREN

"The Love that Forgives," On the Chancel Steps, children's resources by Frances Woodruff
<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2013/08/31/forgives/>

Faith Formation Journeys
<http://faithformationjourneys.org/?p=1141>

"[Sermon of the Week,](#)" / "[Mensajes para ninos,](#)" Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Coloring Pages, Puzzles. <http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

[Story for Children's Worship and Family Activity](#), Ordinary 24, at word-sunday.com: A Catholic Resource for the Lectionary by Larry Broding
<http://www.word-sunday.com/index.html>

"[Wearing His Brand,](#)" Children's Sermon from Sermons4kids.com.
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/branded.html>

