



Worship resources Trinity 17

One of the toughest question we face as people of faith concerned with justice and peace, is how to hold together the invitation of the Gospel with the confrontation that God's reign brings against personal and corporate sin and evil. But, as tough as it may be, we do not have the luxury of avoiding this question, and this week's Lectionary brings us face to face with it in dramatic and helpful ways.

May our worship this week invite us deeper into God's reign and confront the places in our lives where we refuse God's reign entrance into us.

INTRODUCTIONS

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

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20: God speaks God's commandments to the people of Israel who are terrified by the thunder, lightning, smoke and trumpet sounds. They ask Moses to speak to God on their behalf, because of their fear, but Moses reassures them that God is simply keeping the people in awe so they don't sin.

OR **Isaiah 5:1-7:** A prophecy of judgement in which the people of Israel and Judah are likened to a vineyard which God tends and cares for, but which produces rotten grapes instead of good ones.

Psalms 19: A psalm celebrating creation which proclaims God's glory, and God's law which enlightens brings reward to those who keep it.

OR **Psalms 80:7-15:** A plea to God to come and save the vine that God planted, but which has now had its wall torn down, and is vulnerable and open to destruction.

Philippians 3:4b-14: Paul, who has good reason for confidence under the law because of his upbringing and observance, values only the righteousness which he has received through Christ, and through which he knows the power of Christ's resurrection and participates in Christ's sufferings.

Matthew 21:33-46: Jesus tells a story about a farmer who cultivates a vineyard and then rents it to tenant farmers, who, instead of giving the farmer his share of the fruit when it's due, kills his servants and then the farmer's son. In this way, he explains, God's reign is being given to those who will produce fruit.

Readings at:

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=%0AExodus%2020:%201-4,%207-9,%2012-20%0A%2BOR%0AIsaiah%205:1-7%0A%20Psalm%2019%0A%2BOR%0APsalm%2080:8-16%0APhilippians%203:%204b-14%0AMatthew%2021:%2033-46

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

Lord, we pray thee
that thy grace may always prevent and follow us,
and make us continually to be given to all good works;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect Two

Almighty God,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you:
Teach us to offer ourselves to your service,
that here we may have your peace,
and in the world to come may see you face to face;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

A: Jesus revealed God's Kingdom in parables and by healing the sick and sharing his table with all who came to him. Let us pray for God's Kingdom to come more fully in the world saying, "Your Kingdom come," and responding, "Your will be done."

For the Church throughout Latin America, that they may be strengthened in their ministry as they uphold the poor and speak to their governments about God's justice; and for the Church in the rest of the world, that we might find meaningful ways to support and uphold them.

Your Kingdom come,

Your will be done.

For governments and corporations that they might see job creation as their responsibility and the building up of the human community as their bottom line,

Your Kingdom come,

Your will be done.

For the unemployed that they may find meaningful work and be treated with dignity,

Your Kingdom come,

Your will be done.

For all those who work hard in the church: Mothers' Union, altar guilds, property committees, financial officers, teachers, youth leaders, choir members, Select Vestry, those who visit the sick and shut-in, that they may be rewarded with a renewed sense that they are working in God's kingdom,

Your Kingdom come,

Your will be done.

For the sick and those with special needs, especially _____, that God might nourish them with friendships and hope,

Your Kingdom come,

Your will be done.

For our parish, that all of us may learn to measure people by God's infinite love and not by society's standards of usefulness,

Your Kingdom come,

Your will be done.

Abundant God, you invite us to celebrate your generosity. Help us to repent of our miserly stewardship of your grace and teach us to live as if your Kingdom were already here in its fullness. We pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

As we rejoice in the Lord always, let us make known our requests to God, the refuge of the poor and needy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

For candidates for public office and 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/ton/parish and those who live in it and for our families, companions, and 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.

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

Lord, have mercy.

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

Presider

God the king of heaven, who wipes away every tear, hear the prayers we offer this day and clothe us in robes of white for the wedding banquet of your Son; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

God our guide,
you feed us with bread from heaven

as you fed your people Israel.
May we who have been inwardly nourished
be ready to follow you
all the days of our pilgrimage on earth,
until we come to your kingdom in heaven.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

God of Aaron, Miriam, and Moses,
you stayed the hand of your wrath
when we fell into idolatry and discord;
and when we forgot our deliverance,
your love for us remained unchanging.
Transform us and our world
into a place of justice, love, and peace.
Welcome us to your wedding feast
where all are invited to be gathered in. Amen.

Lord of the feast,
you have prepared a table before all peoples
and poured out life with such abundance
that death cannot claim the triumph over your universe.
Call us again to your banquet where we may receive your holy food,
and strengthened by what is honourable, just, and pure,
be transformed into a people of righteousness and peace. Amen.

Almighty God,
source of every blessing,
your generous goodness comes to us anew every day.
By the work of your Spirit lead us to acknowledge your goodness,
give thanks for your benefits,
and serve you in willing obedience;
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord of creation, whose glory is around and within us: open our eyes to your wonders, that we may serve you with reverence and know your peace at our lives' end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Common Worship Shorter Collect*

Lord, in your goodness, open our eyes to your light and so fill our hearts with your glory, that we may acknowledge Jesus as Saviour and hold fast to his word in sincerity and truth. We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen *Methodist Worship*

God of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness and of your great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

O God, from whom to be turned is to fall, to whom to be turned is to rise, and in whom to stand is to abide for ever: grant us in all our duties your help, in all our perplexities your guidance, in all our dangers your protection, and in all our sorrows your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen *St Augustine, 354-430*

Almighty God, source of every blessing, your generous goodness comes to us anew every day. By the work of your Spirit lead us to acknowledge your goodness, give thanks for your benefits, and serve you in willing obedience. Indeed we pray you to pour out your Holy Spirit upon us - your Spirit of joy and laughter - of comfort and of strength - that we might celebrate with you and you with us, as we offer our worship and ourselves to you this day; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dear God. Fill us with those things that are good: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely and honourable. Help us to put into practice what we have learned from your Word. Loving God, you have invited us to feast in your promised Kingdom. May we never be so busy that we cannot turn to you, and thankfully celebrate the power of Your Son. Amen

LECTIONARY NOTES

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: The issue of legalism may, at first glance, seem to be a purely religious one, with little relevance to wider society where the rule of law is usually held up as the only basis for organising society. However, on closer inspection some fascinating insights may emerge. To begin with the law, whether “secular” or “sacred” is never intended to be an end in itself. It is always only meant to be a way to a life of justice, peace, equity and community. When the law does its work well, people are encouraged to live considerately and respectfully, and to abide by principles that seek the common good. However, the law is too easily recruited to the very agendas that it is supposed to protect us against. One example might be the aggressive way that copyright law is being enforced in the face of changing ways of consuming media and the arts. In a system where wealthy executives control intellectual property and make a lot of money out of it, there is little will to change to embrace new realities with the result that ordinary citizens are viewed as criminals, and even artists are prevented from benefiting from their own work when it has come under the control of powerful corporations. In similar ways, political lobby groups in industries as diverse as

power, food production, pharmaceuticals and international trade ensure that lawmakers become their allies in the accumulation of wealth and the criminalising of anyone who would get in the way of their quest for profit. Again, lists upon lists of examples could be given, but you need look no further than the political influence exerted by petroleum companies, or the laws that control the use of patented seeds. The net result is that the law, which should have brought life, equity, justice and the common good, has been manipulated to favour the powerful, to pamper the rich and to keep the poor and unconnected in check. The vineyard is now truly producing rotten fruit, and those who point this out are often mocked, persecuted or even arrested. And this reality exists in so-called “developed” and “civilised” countries as much as those that are considered to be under the control of “tyrants”. In the face of this, followers of Christ are called to speak the truth, to uphold the values of life, peace and justice, and stand against the law when it becomes the servant of evil and oppression. Such was the prophetic task of the Church in apartheid South Africa. Such remains the prophetic task of the Church in a world of fossil fuel dependence, widespread poverty, AIDS, war and globalisation.

LOCAL APPLICATION: The legalistic application of law is a destructive influence in relationships from families to faith communities. The parable of the vineyard is a powerful description of what this looks like. Legalistic people, who believe they control the “vineyard” (which can be truth, a particular community, a particular ministry, a family or a person), impose strict regulations on it, sucking all the “fruit” (energy, love, connection, wisdom, giftedness etc.) out of it and leave it in the position that it is only able to produce fruit that is rotten. Or, alternatively, they leave the “vineyard” in a situation where its fruit is available only for them. And, when others try to bring insight, healing or correction into this situation, the legalists react aggressively, using the law (or their version of it) as a club with which to beat all opponents. Such abuse is all too common in our churches and in the homes of those who claim to follow “the Bible”. It’s another situation in which the law (or the Bible) which is intended as a doorway to life, ends up becoming an end in itself, and robs life. It is this abusive use of the law that leads husbands to force their wives to “submit” or parents to force their children into terrified adherence. It is this abusive use of the law that leads pastors to control their congregations through threats and self-righteous judgements. And it is this abusive use of the law that leads Christians to judge and condemn those with whom they disagree – even those whom they should consider to be their brothers and sisters in Christ. Whenever law becomes the focus of any relationship or community, people end up lifeless and battered. Ultimately the only “righteousness” that has value is that which

Paul speaks about – the righteousness which is given to us as a gift in Christ, and which draws us into the life and joy of Christ's resurrection, even as it leads us to serve and love others with cross-embracing self-giving. From another perspective, the temptation is always there for us to choose law over the unpredictable, scary journey into intimacy with God. Like the Israelites, we may find dealing with God too difficult or frightening, and so we may settle for rituals or traditions which lose their ability to point us to God because we make them idols to replace God. Ultimately, the truth we must face this week is that whenever we choose law over relationship – with God or with one another – we lose life, and we become destructive, like vineyards that produce only rotten fruit.

SERMON OUTLINE 1

SERMON OUTLINE 2

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"Tenants in God's Kingdom," the Rev. Dr. Frank Hegedus, Sermons that Work, Episcopal Digital Network

Any halfway decent real-estate agent or commercial property manager could probably explain today's gospel parable from Matthew in two seconds flat. It is all about landlords and tenants after all. And there is an entire body of business law devoted to them and their all-too-numerous disputes.

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2014/09/16/17-pentecost-proper-22-a-2014/>

"Trouble at the Festival," the Rev. Dr. Dock Hollingsworth, Day 1

http://day1.org/6136-trouble_at_the_festival

"How Do We Get to Holy?" Rev. Stephen McKinney-Whitaker, Day 1

http://day1.org/3236-how_do_we_get_to_holy

"Who's in Charge Here?" the Rev. Dr. Wiley Stephen, Day 1

http://day1.org/1113-who_is_in_charge_here

"The Gift of Community," the Rev. Ann Svennungsen, Day 1

http://day1.org/959-the_gift_of_community

On Matthew 22: 1 – 14.

“There have been moments in listening to this story from the 22nd chapter of Matthew that I have wanted to simply stop, call a time out, and ask myself what is really going on here. The reason I say that is because the story sounds like something that I could guess the ending of. It's the kind of story where you think, "Oh, I know where this is going. This sounds good. I understand the point." But then halfway through it, it suddenly changes on you....

...Theologians and scholars can spend a great deal of time explaining all of this to us, but today, for my own sake, I'm simply going to sit here with you in an ambivalent moment in our reading and understanding of the Gospel. I'm simply going to call a time out and see if together we can understand what might really be happening in this strange story.

“And I believe I have a clue. What is happening is that we are dealing here with a powerful symbol. The wedding gown is a symbol that has been lost to us. It meant something to the readers and to the listeners of the time of Jesus who knew that a wedding gown implied the hospitality that was being extended and the respect and recognition that was due in return. That's been lost to us in our culture, where we are so informal that the idea of showing up without having the proper attire would not necessarily mean a one-way ticket to damnation.”

Day 1 By the former Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, MA. i.e., the one closest to Harvard... at least geographically!
<http://day1.org/958-sermon> for proper 23

What shall I wear? America magazine - Leads in with, “Recently I watched “My Big Fat Greek Wedding,” a film filled with the exuberant joy of the human condition. It culminates in a wedding feast with steaming plates of food, much to drink and enthusiastic dancing...

and concludes, “All of us can thank God for the invitation to the eucharistic banquet given in baptism, which is an anticipation of the end-time feasting with God and the saints. Catholics today must also question their willingness to join all too gleefully in the “blame game.” The ongoing season of shame in the church has funded this game now vigorously played by all sides and often with a total lack of “goodness and kindness.” Unlike the sad man without a proper garment, we still have time, but you never know when the final invitation will come.’

The customary short, informed, incisive style.

http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2515

Excuses - This preacher lists the excuses various famous people could have made to reject the invitation to the banquet - from RL Stevenson and Mother Theresa to the disabled woman who started Meals on Wheels.

http://www.gerhardy.id.au/pent21_05.htm

CHILDREN

Sermons4kids - Theme: Everyone is invited to God's celebration. **Object:** Party invitations, party hats and favors. Perhaps a cake to share with the children. **Scripture:** Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. Matthew 22:9-10 (NIV)

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/you-are-invited.html>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

1st Reading Exodus 20: 1–4, 7–9, 12–20

383* Lord, be thy word my rule
135* [O come, O come, Emmanuel]
637* O for a closer walk with God
638* O for a heart to praise my God
76* Sweet is the work, my God and King

Psalm Psalm 19

606* As the deer pants for the water
153 Come, thou Redeemer of the earth
351 From all that dwell below the skies
631* God be in my head
696* God, we praise you! God, we bless you!
616 In my life, Lord, be glorified
97* Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
384* Lord, thy word abideth
432* Love is his word, love is his way
638* O for a heart to praise my God
34* O worship the King all-glorious above
35* The spacious firmament on high

1st Reading Isaiah 5: 1–7

51* Awake, my soul, and with the sun

Psalm Psalm 80: 8–16

695* God of mercy, God of grace

2nd Reading Philippians 3: 4b–14

560 Alone with none but thee, my God

218* And can it be that I should gain

561* Beneath the cross of Jesus

11* Can we by searching find our God

566* Fight the good fight with all thy might

418* Here, O my Lord, I see thee face to face

99* Jesus, the name high over all

425* Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts

671 Jesus, thy blood and righteousness

588* Light of the minds that know him

81* Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided

248* We sing the praise of him who died

247* When I survey the wondrous cross

376* Ye holy angels bright

The Gospel Matthew 21: 33–46

215* [Ah, holy Jesu, how hast thou offended]

326* Blessèd city, heavenly Salem

* (Christ is made the sure foundation)

327* Christ is our corner stone

268* Hail thou once–despisèd Jesus

93* I danced in the morning when the world was begun

230* My Lord, what love is this

231* My song is love unknown

340* Sing and be glad, for this is God's house!

493* Ye that know the Lord is gracious

[The King Of Love My Shepherd Is](#)

[Praise, My Soul, The King Of Heaven](#)

[Saviour, Like A Shepherd Lead Us](#)

[Come Sinners To The Gospel Feast](#)

[We Won't Stay Silent](#) (*Scroll down for links to preview, chord chart & song sheet*)

[Never Let My Hunger Die](#)

[You Are](#)

[Love And Justice](#)

[What Grace \(Father To You\)](#)

Please commend this resource to colleagues - they simply send an email to churchnewsireland@gmail.com with the message Passwords in the title