

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Occasion: Proper 24

Sunday, October 20, 2019

Year (cycle): C

Resource Website Links:

[The Collect/Readings¹](#)

[Book/Passage Summaries²](#)

[Reflection Question\(s\)³](#)

[Art Reflection Slideshow⁴](#)

The Collect:

Almighty and everlasting God, in Christ you have revealed your glory among the nations: Preserve the works of your mercy, that your Church throughout the world may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading 1

Old Testament:

Jeremiah 31:27-34

27 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of humans and the seed of animals. 28 And just as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring evil, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the Lord. 29 In those days they shall no longer say:

‘The parents have eaten sour grapes,
and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’

30 But all shall die for their own sins; the teeth of everyone who eats sour grapes shall be set on edge.

31 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God,

and they shall be my people. 34No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

[Link to Passage Summary](#)

Reflection Question(s):

Jeremiah 31:27-34

This passage echoes the charge given to Jeremiah when God called him to the work of a prophet: "to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring evil... to build and to plant" (Jeremiah 3:28, NRSV; cf. Jeremiah 1:10). Jeremiah sees and proclaims that the situation of his people is dire and that the day of reckoning is near. But this is a text of hope; God will not allow destruction to have the last word. In this passage, Jeremiah sets out a vision of God's continuing commitment to God's people, despite the fact that they have abandoned God like an unfaithful spouse. God's irrepressible love for Israel - and for us - overcomes all, and Jeremiah proclaims the restoration of an exiled people to a newly fertile homeland. In the renewed covenant, God's people know and love God's laws so well that they become second nature, or better still, first nature.

- Where do you see God making good on the promise of a renewed, intimate relationship with you? With the Church? With the world?

[Link to Art Reflection Slideshow](#)

Reading 2

Psalms 119:97-104

- 97 Oh, how I love your law! *
all the day long it is in my mind.
- 98 Your commandment has made me wiser than my enemies, *
and it is always with me.
- 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, *
for your decrees are my study.
- 100 I am wiser than the elders, *
because I observe your commandments.
- 101 I restrain my feet from every evil way, *

that I may keep your word.
102 I do not shrink from your judgments, *
because you yourself have taught me.
103 How sweet are your words to my taste! *
they are sweeter than honey to my mouth.
104 Through your commandments I gain understanding; *
therefore I hate every lying way.

[Link to Passage Summary](#)

Reflection Question(s):

Psalm: 119:97-104

Psalm 119 is famously focused on the love of the Torah - God's revelation given to the Jewish people in the first five books of the Bible, here referred to as "law" and "commandment." Many Christians are quick to hear these words and think of a rigid set of rules, with God as some kind of supernatural taskmaster, waiting for us to make a mistake. But this is not how the psalmist has received the Torah; this passage is not about the results the psalmist hopes for, or an arrogant boast about her piety. If we read this passage as a song of thanksgiving and joy, we hear the psalmist describing what happens when we pattern our lives around God's way of love: we gain wisdom and insight and have the strength not to act in destructive ways. Taken together with our reading from Jeremiah, we begin to see a fuller picture of what God's dream for us and for the world looks like.

- How are you patterning your life around God's way of love?

[Link to Art Reflection Slideshow](#)

Reading 3

Epistle:

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

14But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, 15and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17so

that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

1In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: 2proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. 3For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, 4and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. 5As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

[Link to Passage Summary](#)

Reflection Question(s):

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

This letter is written to exhort and encourage the young leader of an early Christian congregation, and today's passage forms a climax of sorts, as Paul encourages Timothy to not only follow the example of his mentor but also to stand firm in the faith and traditions that have been passed on to him. Timothy would have been familiar with scripture (which to him would have been the books we now call the Old Testament), but much of the teachings of Jesus and the meaning of his resurrection were still being passed on orally. Paul and others devoted their lives to testifying to how their lives had been forever changed by encountering the resurrected Jesus. For Timothy, then, the charge is to remain faithful to this truth and in continuing to pass it on. Paul acknowledges that there will be those within the Christian community who trade their baptismal commitments for ways of thinking that more quickly satisfy or that stroke the ego, but along with Timothy, our task is to keep a clear vision of who we are in Christ and continue to proclaim the life-changing work of God through Jesus - the reason the Church exists at all.

- How has the good news of the Resurrection been passed on to you? How are you passing it on to others?

[Link to Art Reflection Slideshow](#)

Reading 4

Gospel:

Luke 18:1-8

1 Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. 2He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. 3In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Grant me justice against my opponent." 4For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, 5yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming." ' 6And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? 8I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'

[Link to Passage Summary](#)

Reflection Question(s):

Luke 18:1-8

"Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart... 'And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'" (Luke 18:1, 8). What seemed to be fairly innocuous teaching about prayer takes on an unexpected character when Jesus mentions the end of the age. For context, the section that appears before this parable in Luke's Gospel is helpful, and we see that today's reading forms the second part of a teaching that began in chapter 17: "The days are coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it" (Luke 17:22). Jesus' teaching on the value of persisting in prayer is not to say that we should badger God until we get what we want, like the widow. Rather we are invited to consider that if even finite humans are capable of getting around to justice (even if for the wrong reasons), how much more is God ready to establish the justice of God's kingdom? Today's readings paint a picture of a God who has promised to establish a world where all live justly and in intimate relationship with God. They encourage us to stand firm in our faith in that promise while continuing to pray for its fulfillment.

- Every Sunday, we pray, “thy kingdom come, thy will be done.” What does it look like to persevere in praying for this in ways that are specific to your community?

[Link to Art Reflection Slideshow](#)

Sources

¹ “Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost, ” *The Episcopal Church*, <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/lectionary/nineteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-1>

² Chris Haslam, “Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost-October 20, 2019,” *Comments: Revised Lectionary Commentary*, <http://montreal.anglican.org/comments/cpr29m.shtml?>

³Noah Stansbury, “Pentecost 19 (C)-October 20, 2019”, *Bible Study*, <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/bible-study/bible-study-pentecost-19-c-october-20-2019>

⁴ The Revised Common Lectionary, “Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost Year C”, *Slideshow Formats*, <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/slides.php>