



*A Service of Morning Prayer
Sunday, 29 March 2020
The Fifth Sunday of Lent
(Passiontide begins) with Sermon text
from Mother Yejide Peters*

Preparation

O Lord, open our lips

All

and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Let your ways be known upon earth,

All

your saving power among the nations.

One or more of the following is said or sung:

this or another prayer of thanksgiving

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation,
to you be praise and glory for ever.

As a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief
your only Son was lifted up

that he might draw the whole world to himself.

May we walk this day in the way of the cross
and always be ready to share its weight,

declaring your love for all the world.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All

Blessed be God for ever.

a suitable hymn, or A Song of Lamentation

1

Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? ◆

Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow,

2

Which was brought upon me, ◆

which the Lord inflicted
on the day of his fierce anger.

3

For these things I weep;
my eyes flow with tears; ♦

for a comforter is far from me,
one to revive my courage.

4

Remember my affliction and my bitterness, ♦
the wormwood and the gall!

5

But this I call to mind, ♦
and therefore I have hope:

6

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, ♦
his mercies never come to an end;

7

They are new every morning; ♦
great is your faithfulness.

8

'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, ♦
'therefore I will hope in him.'

9

The Lord is good to those who wait for him, ♦
to the soul that seeks him.

10

It is good that we should wait quietly ♦
for the salvation of the Lord.

11

For the Lord will not reject for ever; ♦
though he causes grief, he will have compassion,

12

According to the abundance of his steadfast love; ♦
for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone.

Lamentations 1.12, 16a,b; 3.19, 21-26, 31-33

All

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

This opening prayer may be said

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever.

All

Amen.

The Word of God

The appointed psalmody is said.

Psalm 86

Refrain:

*All nations you have made shall come and worship
you, O Lord.*

- 1 Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, ◆
for I am poor and in misery.
- 2 Preserve my soul, for I am faithful; ◆
save your servant, for I put my trust in you.
- 3 Be merciful to me, O Lord, for you are my God; ◆
I call upon you all the day long.
- 4 Gladden the soul of your servant, ◆
for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. *R*
- 5 For you, Lord, are good and forgiving, ◆
abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.
- 6 Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer ◆
and listen to the voice of my supplication.
- 7 In the day of my distress I will call upon you, ◆
for you will answer me. *R*
- 8 Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord, ◆

nor any works like yours.

9 All nations you have made shall come and worship you,
O Lord, ◆
and shall glorify your name.

10 For you are great and do wonderful things; ◆
you alone are God. *R*

11 Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; ◆
knit my heart to you, that I may fear your name.

12 I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart, ◆
and glorify your name for evermore;

13 For great is your steadfast love towards me, ◆
for you have delivered my soul from the depths
of the grave. *R*

14 O God, the proud rise up against me
and a ruthless horde seek after my life; ◆
they have not set you before their eyes.

15 But you, Lord, are gracious and full of compassion, ◆
slow to anger and full of kindness and truth.

16 Turn to me and have mercy upon me; ◆
give your strength to your servant
and save the child of your handmaid.

17 Show me a token of your favour,
that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed; ◆
because you, O Lord, have helped and comforted me.

Refrain:

*All nations you have made shall come and worship
you, O Lord.*

God of mercy,

*who in your great love
drew your Son from the depths of the Pit,
bring your people from death to life,
that we may rejoice in your compassion
and praise you now and for ever.*

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Canticle
A Song of the Lord's Gracious Deeds

Refrain:
All

**I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,
the praises of the Most High.**

- 1 Who is this that comes from Edom, ◆
coming from Bozrah, his garments stained crimson?
- 2 Who is this in glorious apparel, ◆
marching in the greatness of his strength?
- 3 'It is I, who announce that right has won the day, ◆
it is I,' says the Lord, 'for I am mighty to save.'
- 4 Why are your robes all red, O Lord, ◆
and your garments like theirs who tread the winepress?
- 5 'I have trodden the winepress alone, ◆
and from the peoples no one was with me.'
- 6 I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, ◆
the praises of the Most High;
- 7 All that God has done for us in his mercy, ◆
by his many acts of love.

8 For God said, 'Surely, they are my people,
my children who will not deal falsely,' ♦
and he became their Saviour in all their distress.

9 So God redeemed them by his love and pity; ♦
he lifted them up and carried them
through all the days of old.

Isaiah 63.1-3a, 7-9

All

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

All

**I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,
the praises of the Most High.**

Scripture Reading

***One or more readings appointed for the day are read.
The reading(s) may be followed by a time of silence.***

John 11:1-45

John 11:1-45

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going

there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the

house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Sermon

As a child, I would occasionally go to Sunday School with my cousin, and I knew, that every time we went, I would have to recite a Bible verse from memory...and if you know the King James Version, you may also know that the shortest verse in scripture is in

today's passage "Jesus Wept", or in this translation, Jesus began to weep.

The only problem with this incredibly short verse (two words!) was you could only use it once per year, because the teacher would record when you'd use it, and then you had to learn another verse. Alas....and this is how I came to know a verse that has shaped my understanding of who Jesus is for us.

This passage centers around the death of one of Jesus's close friends. We can infer this because his sisters, Mary and Martha have several mentions in the scriptures and because the Scripture tells us that "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus" . but what moves me about this Scripture is the sheer humanity of it. Jesus weeps. The way Jesus moves through these events, well aware of His intention to restore Lazarus to life, and also deeply saddened by the sorrow his death has caused and filled with compassion for his friends, says so much about how Jesus meets us in our lives.

Sometimes, we as Christians make the mistake of thinking the promise of New Life, of Resurrection, or even of Healing means that we ought not feel sorrow. After all, the thinking goes, if we know it will all come right in the end, then we ought to live in that promise, and let go of our present circumstances.

But while I do believe we need to live in light of the promise, that in no way takes away this present sorrow. We are flesh and blood. We live in 'Chronos' time, that is the time we record on a clock. We are not like God, present in every moment. While we are simultaneously in "Kyros" that is God's time, we do not experience it very often. We do not feel free from the constraints of Instead we feel bound by the limitations of human life. Death is a very real and final separation for us in so many senses, and it is the one thing we, as limited people, must face over and over again through the loss of loved ones until we, too, die.

All around us, whether we want to face it or not, are signs that many people will die. Some will be close friends, even family, and some will only be known to us through news reports or as statistics in what feels like a tidal wave of hope-less information.

So this is a moment when we are Mary and Martha. We are running up the road to meet Jesus and asking “What will you do? How will you make this right?” Our faith tells us that Jesus will meet us on that road, and that his first response will be to talk with us, to learn where we are. He will reassure us of his presence and his love. And he will weep with us.

One of the deep mysteries of faith, that is, one of the realities about which we can barely speak because of how absurd it sounds is this: Jesus will transform this—new life will come from death. God will move through this situation in ways that will surprise us. Resurrection power belongs to Jesus. But how and what Resurrection looks like is also beyond our understanding- especially as we are experiencing the deep sorrow death brings.

Just like Mary and Martha, the promise that resurrection is coming will not take away the sting of these uncertain times. And yet, we can cling to one another, and above all to God even as we wait. Through the hurt and through the uncertainty Jesus will be with us. And we forget or begin to despair, we must turn to one another and remind ourselves that Jesus is beside us, that he will walk with us, even through, and perhaps especially through this valley of death. I want to close with the 23rd Psalm, because it has words of hope—not away from, but in the midst of— a time of suffering. Now is the time to call upon that deeper faith, not because we have seen, but because we have loved and been loved by God. Perhaps you want to join me in saying it:

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

God bless you and keep you today and always.

Intercessions

I ask your prayers for God's people throughout the world; for Justin Archbishop of Canterbury, John Archbishop of York; Michael our Diocesan Bishop and Sara, our Area Bishop; and for all ministers and people. Pray for the Church.

Silence

I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people. Pray for justice and peace.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison. Pray for those in any need or trouble. We pray especially for those who have asked the prayers of this benefice: for Chris Cheshire, Cathryn, Emma, Sarah Doyle, Malcolm Booth, Jessica, Laverne, Maureen, and Rachel.

Silence

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him. Pray that they may find and be found by him.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the departed [especially Jean Grierson, Timothy Carter, Joanna Nichols, Beryl Babel, and Pamela Joy Owens Pray for those who have died and for those they leave to mourn.

Silence

We also pray for those who are remembered especially this week for James Lucas, James Whittaker, Shirley Allcock, Constance Martyr, Dr Dick Jenkins, Shelila Elliott, Norma Maxwell, Jean Hilton, and Reverend William Martyr

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honoured Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

Silence

The Collect of the day is said

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through 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.

All

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer is said

Standing at the foot of the cross,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

The Conclusion

May Christ, who bore our sins on the cross,
set us free to serve him with joy.

All

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

All

Thanks be to God.

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