



The Third Sunday after Epiphany
Sentence

24 January 2016

Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah: 'The Spirit of the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives,'
Luke 4.18

Collect

Life-giving God, who sent your Son Jesus to proclaim your kingdom and to teach with authority: anoint us with your Spirit, that we too may bring good news to the poor, bind up the broken-hearted, and proclaim liberty to the captive; through Jesus Christ our Lord, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of Nehemiah

There is a parallel here between Nehemiah's reading of the Torah – that part we often call 'the law' but better named as 'the way' - and Jesus' reading from Isaiah in the Nazareth synagogue. Here is the model of synagogue worship: the reading of the Torah, with the people standing, and the "giving of the sense" of it (that is, an explanation) so the people will understand clearly; and the response of worship. A similar liturgical order is seen in the synagogue at Nazareth and survives today in the Christian liturgy of the word, including standing at the reading of the gospel, as the Jews stood for the reading of the Torah.

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen', lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground. So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people,

'This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.'

Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10

Reader For the word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God

Psalm 19 APBA Page 239 at 10am TiS 8

This psalm is a prayer that God's law (Torah) may be our constant meditation, so that our thoughts and words may be acceptable in God's sight. Torah embraced the whole of God's revelation. For the Christian, the word or law of God embraces the revelation of the Word-made-flesh.



We praise you, O Lord, for all your works are won-der-ful.

1 The heavens proclaim your glory, O God, and the firmament shows forth the work of your hands. Day unto day takes up the story and night unto night makes known the message.

Response

2 No speech, no word, no voice is heard yet their span extends through all the earth, their words to the utmost bounds of the world.

Response

3 There you have placed a tent for the sun; it comes forth like a bridegroom coming from his tent, rejoices like a champion to run its course.

Response

4 At the end of the sky is the rising of the sun; to the furthest end of the sky is its course. There is nothing concealed from its burning heat.

Response

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians

The image 'body of Christ' is much debated by theologians – just what did Paul mean? Is the Church like a body in which different parts function separately though in co-operation, or are we one with Christ in his resurrection in a way that makes us one identity– as if we merge into one person. As with any attempt to explain a mystery, language proves inadequate. Elsewhere, Paul says we are "one body in Christ" (Romans 12:5) which plays down identity and conveys a common dependence on Christ.

We best learn what this relationship means as we live it over the years!

Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any

less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

1 Cor. 12. 12-31

Reader May your word live in us.

ALL And bear much fruit to your glory.

Gospel Acclamation

ALL Alleluia! Alleluia!

All spoke well of Jesus and were amazed at the gracious works that come from his mouth.

ALL Alleluia!

Reader The Lord be with you

ALL And also with you

Reader A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke

ALL Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ

Luke has shifted the sermon in the synagogue from its later position in Mark (Mark 6:1-6) to the beginning of Jesus' ministry to stress his perspective on Jesus as the one who both continues and completes Israel's story. In his hometown synagogue, Jesus interprets his role as that of the suffering servant of Isaiah's writings. Jesus, the new servant will preach, deliver the oppressed, and perform healings to fulfil God's promises 'to visit and redeem' humanity from its captivity to what is hostile to human wellbeing.

Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

Luke 4.14-21

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord

ALL Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Bible Readings next week The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Malachi 3.1-4 Ps 24 Hebrews 2.14-18 Luke 2.22-40

Prayer for the Week

O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in you: mercifully accept our prayers, and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do nothing without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Pray for the Faithful Departed

We remember before God: Doris Campbell, James (Jim) Ronald Austin, Mona Kingsmill, Lloyd Slattery, John McDonald, Esther Hazel Atkinson, Edward Newton, George Elliot, James Cable, Isabel Ann Osborn, Winifred Wilkinson, Alan Baxter *priest*, Charlotte Bayley, Ethel Manning, Caroline Leonard and Peter Jackson *whose anniversaries occur this week*.

Commemorations of the week :

January 25 Conversion of Paul the Apostle. Described in Acts 9.3-10, 22.6-16 and 26.12-18.

January 26 Australia Day. January 27 John Chrysostom (347-407) Archbishop of Constantinople. He was a noted preacher and commentator on the NT.

January 28 Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). The great theologian of the Middle Ages, who has had an immense influence on the church, especially the Roman Church.

January 30 Charles, King of England, beheaded by the Puritans 1649.