



Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

19 February 2017

Sentence Your Father in heaven makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Matthew 5.45

Collect

Lord of the rising sun and gentle rain, whose gifts are uncounted, whose care is uncaged:

free us from measured love which keeps record of wrong and fails before our violence;

take us outside the limits where we speak only with those whose reflect ourselves,

and recall us to your image, shining and alive in many-coloured eyes, through Jesus, the peace-maker. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of Leviticus

Leviticus is the third book of the Hebrew scriptures and concerned with Temple worship. The tribe of the Levites provided priests for Israel's worship. This reading is from chapters 17-26, called 'the Holiness Collection' and instructs everyone in ways that make for the only holiness that truly reflects God's own – that of behaving ethically, that is lovingly, towards others.

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God. You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; and you shall not lie to one another. And you shall not swear falsely by my

name, profaning the name of your God: I am the LORD. You shall not defraud your neighbour; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a labourer until morning. You shall not revile the deaf or put a stumbling-block before the blind; you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

You shall not render an unjust judgement; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbour. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbour: I am the LORD. You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbour, or you will incur guilt yourself. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD.

Lev. 19.1-2, 9-18

Reader Hear the word of the Lord
ALL Thanks be to God

Psalm 119.33-40 APBA page 351

This is a wisdom psalm, the longest in the collection and an elaborate acrostic in which each section begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The whole psalm urges us to keep and teach God's law, not forget it, rejoice in it and thereby possess life.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Christians in Corinth.

Paul's letters to Corinth (at least the ones we have) were concerned with unity in the church. Here Paul says that only what is built on foundations in Jesus Christ, and with holy intention, will survive the refining fire of God's wisdom.

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as

through fire. Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

1 Cor. 3.10-17

Reader May your word live in us
ALL and bear much fruit to your glory.

Gospel Acclamation

ALL Alleluia! Alleluia!
I am the Lord you God; sanctify yourselves
therefore and be holy, for I am holy.

ALL Alleluia!
Reader The Lord be with you
ALL And also with you
Reader A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew
ALL Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ

The teaching from the sermon on the mount continues. Matthew portrays Jesus as a new and greater Moses teaching God's ways to Israel, and of course to us, as we receive this scripture in our community today. Soldiers could command a person to carry luggage, so going the second mile meant someone else was spared. Such freely given generosity in the face of injustice also reveals unfavourably the other's wrongdoing.

On the mountain, Jesus continued to teach his disciples. 'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you. 'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet only

your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5.38-48

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord

ALL Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Prayer for the Week. Almighty God, you have taught us through your Son that love is the fulfilling of the law: grant that we may love you with our whole heart, and our neighbours as ourselves; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Bible Readings next week: Last Sunday after Epiphany

Exodus 24.12-18 Psalm 2 2 Peter. 1.16-21 Matthew 17.1-9

Pray for the Faithful Departed

We remember before God:

Ada Emery, Erina Villers Pringle, Kit Watling, Alexander Wakefield, Adrian Swan, Thomas Duncan, Stanford Ames, Wylie Ames, Victor Field and Peter Willers *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

Commemorations of the Week

February 20 William Grant Broughton, (1788-1853), the first Anglican Bishop of Australia (1835-1852). In 1842, Tasmania was made a separate diocese and in 1947 Melbourne, Adelaide and Newcastle.

February 23 Polycarp, martyred c. 155. Bishop of Smyrna, Asia Minor (now Turkey). When threatened with death he replied, "For 86 years I have been Christ's servant and he has never done me wrong; how can I blaspheme my king who saved me?" In the arena, Polycarp was killed with a sword and his body burnt.

February 24 Mathias, apostle and martyr. Elected by lot to fill the post occupied by Judas Iscariot (Acts. 1.15-26). He was a follower of Jesus for the whole of Jesus' ministry and a witness of the resurrection.

Stations of the Cross. A new set of carved images of Jesus' journey from his arrest on the Mount of Olives to his death and resurrection will be installed this week in the church. They have been carved by

Engelbert Piccolruiz, a Sydney artist, who made the Christus Rex over the pulpit. During Lent we will pray this journey with Jesus on some Friday evenings—and follow with a fish meal for those who can stay—and us these visual images to engage our imagination as we enter more deeply into the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection. A brochure will also be available for individual prayer. Watch this space for more details.

