



Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

17 September 2017

Sentence If you, O Lord, should note what we do wrong, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.
Psalm 130.3-4

Collect God of debts forgiven, you call us to account for our hunger for power; you disturb our hierarchies which crush the weak: break the vicious cycles of revenge and domination, that we might look to him whose mercy never ends, Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of Exodus.

The story of the Hebrews' escape from Egypt continues when they cross the 'reed' sea safely while the Egyptian chariots bog and they are killed by the water. Presented here as miraculous, the purpose is to show that God was leading the people to a new land. Later Jewish tradition recalls God's love for the drowned Egyptians as well as the chosen Hebrews.

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.' Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.' So Moses stretched out his hand over the

sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

Exodus 14.19-21

Reader Hear the word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God

Psalm 114 8am APBA, 345

A song in praise of the God of the Exodus, which parallels the crossing of the Red Sea with the Jordan River crossing 40 years later.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

The weak in faith here are Jewish Christians who eat kosher food and observe Jewish feasts AND are scandalised when Gentiles do not. Paul is urging both Jews and Gentiles to live in peace as each honours the Lord in their own way. Christian community calls us to mature human relationships because it enables a true relationship with God whose desire is our full humanity in community.

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord* is able to make them stand. Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to

God. We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God. For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.' So then, each of us will be accountable to God. Let us therefore no longer pass judgement on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling-block or hindrance in the way of another. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. *Romans 14.1-14*

Reader May your word live in us
All And bear much fruit to your glory

Gospel Acclamation

All Alleluia! Alleluia!

Cantor Jesus said, 'Forgive your brother or your sister from your heart.'

All Alleluia! 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 parable of the unforgiving servant is found only in Matthew's Gospel. The parable does not teach repeated forgiveness but rebukes refusal to show mercy on the part of those who have received mercy from God. So, it points back to our own behaviour before it directs attention to the other person!

Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. 'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you

everything.” And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, “Pay what you owe.” Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you.” But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, “You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?” And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.’ *Matthew 18.21-35*

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord
ALL Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Prayer for the Week. O God, without you we are not able to please you: mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Bible Readings next week **Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**
Exodus 16.2-15 Ps 105.6-6,37-45 Philippians 1 Matt. 20.1-16

Pray for the Faithful Departed We remember before God: John Taylor, John Hetherington, Dorothy Corden, Lilian St John, Margaret Johnston, Frank Cutriss, *priest*; Ian Agnew, Arnold Williams, Beryl Sadleir, Wilf Jennings *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

Commemorations of the week:

September 17 Hildegard of Bingen, abbess of Rupertsberg (near Bingen on the Rhine) (1098-1179). One of the great mystics of the Middle Ages. Her many visions were she recorded and her writings are still available and valued today.

September 20 John Coleridge Patterson, first bishop of Melanesia, martyred 1871.

September 21 Matthew, apostle, evangelist and martyr.

Matthew was a tax-collector for the Roman government and so despised by his Jewish community, before he became a disciple of Jesus. The gospel attributed to him comes from a Jewish community expelled from the synagogues because of their faith in Jesus as Messiah and written after the fall of Jerusalem in 70AD, probably in Antioch in Syria but perhaps in Tiberias in the Galilee. What is sometimes misread as anti-Semitic attitudes in the gospel are actually inter Jewish rivalries.

Come, sing together, friends

- 1 Come, sing together, friends,
to praise the God we know,
whose Spirit's joy can fill the church
till blessings overflow.
- 2 Come, hear the living Word,
learn Wisdom's gentle way;
the Spirit teaches love's command
and calls us to obey.
- 3 Come, join the church at prayer,
give thanks, and intercede;
the Spirit helps each Christian pray,
and God will meet our need.
- 4 Come with us, serve the One
who served us first, in Christ;
we gladly go in power and peace,
a living sacrifice.