



23rd Sunday after Pentecost

12 November 2017

Sentence Watch and be ready, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.
Matthew 24.42,44

Collect

Eternal God, you have taught us that the night is far spent and the day is at hand:
keep us awake and alert, watching for your kingdom,
so that when Christ, the bridegroom, comes
we may go out joyfully to meet him,
and with him enter into the marriage feast
that you have prepared for all who truly love you;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of Joshua.

All Israel unites under Joshua's leadership and renews the covenant with God now that they have settled, after 40 years in the wilderness, in the land promised to them.

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many. 'Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for

me and my household, we will serve the Lord.' Then the people answered, 'Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.' But Joshua said to the people, 'You cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good.' And the people said to Joshua, 'No, we will serve the Lord!' Then Joshua said to the people, 'You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him.' And they said, 'We are witnesses.' He said, 'Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel.' The people said to Joshua, 'The Lord our God we will serve, and him we will obey.' So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem. Josh. 24.13-a, 14-25

Reader For the word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God

Psalm 78.1-7 APBA p. 301

This psalm reviews Israel's rebellion in the wilderness and begins by communicating to future generations the lessons learned from Israel's past.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians

This letter of Paul (c.50AD) might well be the earliest Christian scripture written. It is addressed to Gentile believers tempted to return to former lives. Expectations of the end of the world and the return of Christ as the end of history were high, and some believed it did not matter how they lived or if they worked. Paul makes it clear that no one knows when such a time might come and that all will be caught up in it, not only those alive at the time. Just what Paul meant is still much debated!

Concerning love of the brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anyone write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do love all the brothers and sisters throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, beloved, to do so more and more, to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we directed you, so that you may behave properly towards outsiders and be dependent on no one. But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Thess. 4.9-18

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

A typical household oil lamp of the type in the gospel reading.



Gospel Acclamation

All Alleluia! Alleluia!
 'Keep awake, therefore', says the Lord:
 'for you know neither the day nor the hour.'

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.

In Palestine, as in many other cultures, the bridegroom fetches his bride from her parents' home and takes her to his. In this parable based on a wedding Jesus contrasts wisdom and folly. (In Proverbs they are personified as two women: Lady Wisdom and Mistress Folly.) Wisdom is alert, with oil in her lamp and ready for the moment when the bridegroom/messiah (see ch9.5), who is Jesus, comes to invite Israel and then all peoples to the marriage feast God is preparing. In Jesus, God has come to fetch us home to our redeemed humanity as we are remade in his likeness by the gift of the Spirit at work in us.

Jesus spoke this parable to the disciples, "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, "Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." But the wise replied, "No! There will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves." And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, "Lord, lord, open to us." But he replied, "Truly I tell you, I do not know you." Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Matthew 25.1-13

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord.

ALL Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer for the Week Blessed Lord, you have caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that, by patience and the comfort of your holy word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bible Readings next week 19 November

24th after Pentecost

Judges 4.1-10 Psalm 123 1Thess. 5.1-11 Matthew 25.14-30

Pray for the Faithful Departed. *We remember before God, Margaret (Peg) Nelson, Natali Cerini, Dorothea Baxter, Charles Smith, Michael Somerville, Aune Smith, Guy Raul Pascal, Florence Williams, Margaret Mercer, Nellie Nabb whose anniversaries occur this week.*

Commemorations of the week.

November 16 Margaret of Scotland, Queen (1046-1093).

Intelligent, beautiful and devout, she founded or revived many monasteries and was noted for her compassion for the poor.

November 17 Hilda (614-680), abbess of Whitby, which she

founded or re-founded. She was especially interested in education, founding libraries, stimulating education of clerics and fostering poetry.

November 17 Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln (1140-1200). Renowned, even in his lifetime, for holiness and devotion. He was a firm defender of ordinary people against royalty and the aristocracy and the proper use of public money.

