

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost **30 September 2018**

Sentence. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can it be seasoned? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.

Mark 9.50

Collect

Pour out your Spirit, O God, over all the world

to inspire every heart with knowledge and love of you.

Grant that we who confess Jesus as Lord may shun whatever is contrary to this faith and give witness to your love that has saved us in Christ, for he lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

A Reading from the book of Numbers

This is a story of complaint in the wilderness. The people complain about the lack of luxurious food, which they ate when slaves in Egypt and Moses complains about the burden of leadership. Israel will remember this journey from slavery to covenant as a time of being totally dependent on God and simultaneous complaining, despite having experienced rescue from oppression and abundant provision at every stage of the journey. Is this a mirror of humanity's simultaneous desire to trust God utterly and childish anxiety about needing to do so?

The Israelites wept again, and said, 'If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.' Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, all at the entrances of their tents. Then the LORD became very angry, and Moses was displeased. So Moses said to the LORD, 'Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favour in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, "Carry them in your

bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child”, to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they come weeping to me and say, “Give us meat to eat!” I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once—if I have found favour in your sight—and do not let me see my misery.’

So the LORD said to Moses, ‘Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their place there with you. So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again.

Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, ‘Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.’ And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, ‘My lord Moses, stop them!’ But Moses said to him, ‘Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit on them!’

Numbers 11.4-6,10-16,24-29

Reader For the word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God

Psalm 19.7-14 APBA page 239

This section of the psalm is a hymn to God the giver of law, which is better thought of as wisdom for living rather than rigid rules. God’s divine instruction is considered to be ‘food for the soul’, reviving the human spirit and sustaining humanity on its journey in life.

Prayer for the Week

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity; mercifully grant us such a measure of your grace that, running in the way of your commandments, we may obtain your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Pray for the Faithful Departed : We remember before God:
James Essex Holt, *priest*, David McInnes, Nancy Milne, Kenneth Moss,
Barbara Hindell, John Weigall, Rosa Brenda Righetti, Nancy Macindoe,
Peter Campbell Trumble, James Whitaker, Gertrude Rhoden,
Kathleen Woollacott, James Elliot Wilkie, Evelyn Pascal, Alice Davie ,
Doris Wood and Vanessa Stevens *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

Notice that even after Jesus has finished teaching them, the disciples still do not understand that God's Spirit is at work through Jesus and cannot be controlled by them. The disciples are defensive about others who join Jesus' mission. It evokes the earlier story in Numbers. The warnings must be read as middle eastern hyperbole. They are exaggerated so that the community understands the point and are not to be taken literally. One who causes others to stumble must be disciplined by the community. The word here translated as 'hell' is Gehenna in the Greek text. It is not a place of eternal punishment, but was the name of the smouldering rubbish dump outside Jerusalem. The area is still an abandoned place today.

After Jesus had finished teaching the disciples, John said to him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. 'If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. 'For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.'

Mark 9.38-50

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord

ALL Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Bible Readings next week

7 October 2018

Genesis 2.18-24 Psalm 8 Hebrews 1.1-4,2.5-12 Mark 10.2-16

A Reading from the letter of James

This closing section of James' letter speaks of the deep connections between faith, forgiveness of sin and healing. Oil was a common medicine in the ancient world and is here invested with divine power. This passage is the basis for the Sacrament of Anointing the Sick and those close to death. .

Above all, my beloved, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your 'Yes' be yes and your 'No' be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation. Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest. My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

James 5.12-20

Reader May your word live in us.

ALL And bear much fruit to your glory.

Gospel Acclamation

ALL Alleluia! Alleluia!

Cantor Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, says the Lord.

ALL Alleluia!

Reader The Lord be with you

ALL And also with you

Reader A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

ALL Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.