



Happy Father's Day!



St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Bridgeville, Delaware

"The Little Church with a Big Heart"

A Prayer for the Third Sunday after Pentecost

June 21, 2020

COLLECT

O LORD, make us have perpetual love and reverence for your holy Name, for you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your loving-kindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever..*Amen.*

FIRST READING – Jeremiah 20:7-13

O LORD, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me. For whenever I speak, I must cry out, I must shout, "Violence and destruction!" For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long.

If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. For I hear many whispering: "Terror is all around! Denounce him! Let us denounce him!" All my close friends are watching for me to stumble. "Perhaps he can be enticed, and we can prevail against him, and take our revenge on him." But the Lord is with me like a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble, and they will not prevail. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten. O Lord of hosts, you test the righteous, you see the heart and the mind; let me see your retribution upon them, for to you I have committed my cause. Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hands of evildoers.

PSALM 69:8-11, [12-17], 18-20

(REFRAIN – Answer me, O God, in your great mercy)

⁸ Surely, for your sake have I suffered reproach, *
and shame has covered my face.

⁹ I have become a stranger to my own kindred, *
an alien to my mother's children.

¹⁰ Zeal for your house has eaten me up; *
the scorn of those who scorn you has fallen upon
me.

¹¹ I humbled myself with fasting, *
but that was turned to my reproach.

[¹² I put on sack-cloth also, *
and became a byword among them.

¹³ Those who sit at the gate murmur against me, *
and the drunkards make songs about me.

¹⁴ But as for me, this is my prayer to you, *
at the time you have set, O Lord:

¹⁵ "In your great mercy, O God, *
answer me with your unfailing help.

¹⁶ Save me from the mire; do not let me sink; *
let me be rescued from those who hate me and
out of the deep waters.

¹⁷ Let not the torrent of waters wash over me,
neither let the deep swallow me up; *
do not let the Pit shut its mouth upon me.]

¹⁸ Answer me, O Lord, for your love is kind; *
in your great compassion, turn to me.'

¹⁹ "Hide not your face from your servant; *
be swift and answer me, for I am in distress.

²⁰ Draw near to me and redeem me; *
because of my enemies deliver me.

SECOND READING – Romans 6:1b-11

Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

THE GOSPEL – Matthew 10:24-39

JESUS SAID TO THE TWELVE DISCIPLES, “A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

“So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

“Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.”

SERMON – Fr. Carl Mosley

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and a warm welcome for all who are watching this video.

Being an old guy, I grew up with the memories and stories of World War Two and the Korean War being played out on the new thing called television, the radio and the newspapers. I saw men fighting and dying each day as they struggled to either preserve their way of life or to force their wills on the wills of others. We sit back today and we see that we still live in a war-torn world. We see fighting in the Middle East, in Europe, and even in our own back yard. In our nation today we see the conflicts of race, sexual orientation, and the economy all around us, with some of it erupting into violence. We wonder if it ever stops.

But fighting on this little globe we call earth has been going on for centuries. We look into our bibles and we see in the Old Testament wars and battles fought in the name of God. We wonder how many are fought over religion. One commentary that I saw years ago said that there could have been as many as 362 conflicts in our world, yet another said that were none in the name of religion. They say that money, power and greed far outweigh the reasons for the fighting and that religion was seen merely as a rallying cry or an excuse.

Before Jesus came on the scene, the Jews had been experiencing 200 years of war and fighting with Syrian Armies. It may have been said that they had made a pact with the devil, the Roman government and Roman military, for protection and help. When Jesus came to live among us on

earth, the people looked to him to be the Messiah. They expected him to set up his kingdom and establish a kingdom of peace. They were tired of the fighting and the oppression.

Isaiah prophesied that child would be born and the government would be upon his shoulder and he shall be called wonderful, counselor.

They were looking for someone to overthrow the Roman rule, someone to relieve some of the oppressive laws and restrictions that had been put upon them by their protectors. The Messiah was expected to restore their nation and land to the glories of David and Solomon. The Messiah was to lead them to a time where they could live in peace and harmony.

The Apostle Paul, in his Epistles, wrote about Jesus and his message seemed to be more about a gospel of peace. Today's gospel message from St. Matthew seems to be saying something entirely different. Was Jesus confused? Did Jesus not understand what he was to do? He came to bring a sword?

We need to sit back, as the Jews needed to do, and to adjust our point of view. Most people follow with an agenda. 2000 years ago the people wanted peace and they wanted to put Jesus on the throne. In their mind that was what the Messiah was supposed to do.

Churches today, in many cases, have become nothing more than social do-gooders and preaching that everyone should get along and that the Christ promises peace and tranquility. But our Gospel reminds us that He is sending out into the world as sheep in the midst of wolves. He sent his disciples out to go and tell that salvation is near for those who believe in Jesus Christ and the cross.

Before the pandemic I had a long and lively discussion with the granddaughter who has visited us at St. Mary's a number of times. She sometimes appears to be so smart we wonder what gene pool she came from. That being said, our discussion turned to God, the church, and where we are as a people and the role, we play in the world today. We talked about the worship of God within the many other religions of the world today. There are some who profess to be Christians and who believe in God. Yet they sit back say that they worship the "one true God." Yet we know that God is worshipped by many religions and in many different ways.

I have told the story that when my youngest daughter was in high school, she was dating a young man who was a Jew and my Southern Baptist mother was having apoplexy. "How can you let your daughter date a boy who is a Jew?" I said, mom, he believes in God and is in synagogue each week. Her retort was that he doesn't believe in Jesus Christ. She forgot that the Jews pray to the same God that you and I do. They just don't acknowledge as we do that Jesus was the son of God, the Messiah. As many times as I said that he believed in God, she still could not overcome the fact that her belief as to what religion and worship meant was the only way to live your life.

We look around us and forget that in the religions in the world today, Muslims, Seventh Day Adventist, Mormons, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and the list goes on and on, there are those who we might think are not "true believers in God." They sit back and say that they have their belief rooted in "a higher power." Is that the God we know? I would like to think that it is. When we reach out to those that we meet every day, and try to explain what Jesus means to us and that He is the way for salvation, we are going to get opposition, we are going to get push back. But we have to understand that as we bring the message to them, it is up to them to discern

the message and to decide, due to God's gift of free will, if they wish to follow Christ. As Jesus said in past week, in Mat 10:14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. But we are never to stop.

The verses today, tell us, that division and conflict will come from the religious authorities, from our families and yes even from ourselves and our fears. But God is with us. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit gives us the faith, the words, and the ability to overcome our fears, to go beyond. Yes, it is sometimes hard for me to preach or to reach out to others "outside of the box." But by studying the word of God, God will give to us the words to say. Nothing can come out of the mouth that God hasn't put there if we only listen and study.

Jesus is not giving us a suggestion, he is giving us a command that we go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN

Fr. Carl+