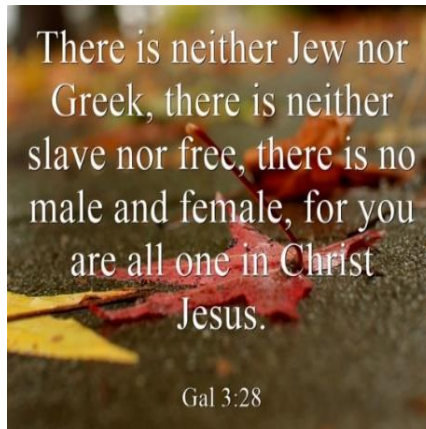




Remembering 1918-2018

Sunday, November 11th, 2018

Faith and Theology amid Cultural Upheaval



Remembering is often understood as just that: returning to a particular event, and thinking about it. In biblical thought, the idea is reversed. Instead of returning to an event, the event *comes to us*. Additionally, for the Hebrews, the event not only comes to us, but it is real, it does not simply lie in the realm of memory, it becomes re-actualized.

An example of this is the way Jews think about the Passover. There, Hebrew faith states that the Exodus event, the ultimate freedom-peace event that grounds Judaism, is actualized in the here and now as Jews gather around the Passover meal. The word used for this idea in Hebrew is “zikkaron”-זִכְרוֹן. In a similar way, the apostle Paul, when speaking of the sacrament of Holy Communion – the Christian meal that remembers Jesus’ sacrifice – uses the word “*anamnesis*” – ἀνάμνησις, for remembrance, pointing out that the presence of the Lord really *comes to us*, and in so doing, really *changes us*. Remembering then, is all about Jesus re-actualized, concretely penetrating our lives, changing our circumstances and us, for the purposes of freedom and peace.

Today, we recall the events of the ending of World War I, through what was referred to as the “Armistice” of November 11th, 1918. Remembrance Day, as we now call it, is broadly symbolic of the human desire for peace and peaceable-ness. Remembrance Day is also taken to mark the birth of a new era in Western history, called the “contemporary world”. If we are to follow Jewish and Christian logic, then this act of remembrance is not just about returning to the event, but instead, the event really coming to us from the past, the re-actualization of the event. So, Remembrance Day is much more than a nostalgic thing. Rather Jews and Christians would say, in Christ, Remembrance Day is actualized in the present as a vehicle to overcome our tribalism, which in part explains why World War I occurred in the first place. Semitic and non-Semitic identities, class identities, gender identities, cultural identities, national identities are not categorical, exhaustive definitions of who we really are. They are but incidental.

GATHERING

Announcements

Greeting

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
 The Lord be with you
and also with you

Hymn: Love Divine (TiS 217, Blaenwern 590, C. Wesley)

Introduction

A Community Prayer: People for Peace and Peaceable-ness

Peace is a noun: everyone claims to love peace, even as it is used as a mask behind which brutal projects are dreamed-up and committed. For this reason, I use the word, “peaceable-ness” which is more of a doing thing, an action, a way of living and relating. It is harder to manipulate the idea of peace if we look at whether concrete actions – of individuals, communities, organizations or nation states – are in fact contributing to peace or not. The truth test of peace, is in the doing, not the claim.

God of peace, you call us to peaceable-ness:
 Functioning internally in peace, functioning externally in peace.

Peace before us and peace behind us
 Peace on our right and peace on our left.

Christ of peace, you call us to peaceable-ness:
 Functioning internally in peace, functioning externally in peace.

Peace with our brother and with our sister.
 Peace with our neighbour and with the stranger.
 Peace with friends and with enemies and all those in-between.

Spirit of peace, you call us to peaceable-ness:
 Functioning internally in peace, functioning externally in peace.

Peace in work and play.
 Peace in thought and action.

Give us your peace so we can be peace-able, creating peace

Confession

We confess the way in which we violate peace in our relations by refusing to act peaceably

We confess the way in which the term peace becomes a 'buzz term', diminished in, gutted of, real meaning

We confess the way in which we manipulatively mask our tribalisms through the use of words and concepts that give the opposite impression.

***Forgive our sin,
Release us from our dishonesty which springs so naturally***

Amen

The Peace

The young people leave for SMG

Some Observations about Remembering

As we remember an event, we interpret it. Over time, an event accumulates meaning. This is the case of the Exodus. The retelling of the story over thousands of years at Passover has added to its layers of meaning for Jews. It is the same for Christian Holy Communion. Over generations we have added layers of interpretation from which new meaning arises. In fact, this is not just a faith thing, we do this with all events of major significance. They have what I call a "reservoir of meaning".

Severino Croatto

When we receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, we don't just recall the events of Christ's death. As partakers of the meal, who remember, we are transformed by it; it is actualised in us. "For

whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you *proclaim* the Lord's death until he comes".

A Theological Historical and Social Study of Remembering in Christian Liturgy...Anonymous

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

Ruth 3:1-5, 4:13-17 Good News Translation (GNT) Gill Lloyd

Last week we heard of the beginning of the saga of Ruth and Naomi, as both women face a dark future, in a male world with no man to protect them. Despite this potentially violent situation, Ruth, promises her loyalty to her mother-in-law, voluntarily moving from her cultural and faith identity to that of Naomi's – something unheard of in a tribalistic world, much as the Middle East remains today. In this reading, we hear that Ruth's loving loyalty (*chesed*), is honoured by God, but not without some scheming by Naomi, who lines her up with a distant relative of Ruth's, Boaz, who on the face of it may owe her rights of kinship, which means protection and possible marriage. In the reading, the scheme works, and a rather benign, kind Boaz marries Ruth. The Hebrew in the second part of the reading is interesting in that the women of the neighbourhood, bless the Lord who they see as the prime mover in the events. They speak of one who will be 'a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age'. It is unclear whether the women speak of the Lord or Boaz or the baby boy. Indeed, this ambiguity may well be deliberate. In the story of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz, peace and justice are restored, people are brought together and made whole. Mutual commitment is the mark of divine blessing and shalom is re-established.

3 Some-time later Naomi said to Ruth, "I must find a husband for you, so that you will have a home of your own. ² Remember that this man Boaz, whose women you have been working with, is our relative. Now listen. This evening he will be threshing the barley. ³ So wash yourself, put on some perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go where he is threshing, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ Be sure to notice where he lies down, and after he falls asleep, go and lift the covers and lie down at his feet. He will tell you what to do."

⁵ Ruth answered, "I will do everything you say."

4 ¹³ So Boaz took Ruth home as his wife. The LORD blessed her, and she became pregnant and had a son. ¹⁴ The women said to Naomi, "Praise the LORD! He has given you a grandson today to take care of you. May the boy become famous in Israel! ¹⁵ Your daughter-in-law loves you, and has done more for you than seven sons. And now she has given you a grandson, who will bring new life to you and give you security in your old age." ¹⁶ Naomi took the child, held him close, and took care of him.

¹⁷ The women of the neighbourhood named the boy Obed. They told everyone, “A son has been born to Naomi!”

Obed became the father of Jesse, who was the father of David.

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Mark 12:38-44

Barry Lloyd

This account from Mark is the very opposite of what peaceable behaviour might look like. If Luke's Gospel in the famous story of the Good Samaritan contained barbed comment about temple officials, Mark's attack is positively damning of their exploitive attitudes and actions. What stands as so offensive in this reading, and what we often do not pick up enough, is the way in which people, the most religious of people in fact, corrupt the most sacred, turning it to a path for self-aggrandizement and power. The horror of this story is that the very structures of grace that are capable of encouraging people to faith and a deeper reading of themselves, are abused by the religious professionals. In this reading, Mark reminds his people that the same reality that existed in Judaism can and will repeat itself in the Christian church. The distance between this Mark's observation and the current crisis in Christianity because of clergy abuse, is very small. It is in this situation of corruption that the poor woman (*ptoche* - *really poor*), gives hope to us. The parading men are upstaged by what most would have seen as a pathetic woman, probably a beggar. The temple is done for.

³⁸As he taught, he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! ⁴⁰They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

⁴¹He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴²A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. ⁴³Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. ⁴⁴For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Christ

Hymn: When love is found (TiS 654, English traditional, Brian Wren)

Video Clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVLQ8INd1Pk>

Charlie Chaplin was *the* great comedian. As a comedian he had extraordinary insight into people and situations, social behaviour and the way power shapes and deforms human beings. In the movie “The Great Dictator” (1940). In this clip, he exposes the banality and small minded-ness of those who possessed by power, abuse it. This is a dialogue between Adenoid Hynkel (a Hitler look-alike) and Benzino Napaloni (a Mussolini look-alike). The scene is about how Hynkel attempts to assert his dominance over the equally narcissistic Napaloni. The chair scene is a little like the dynamic in our Gospel reading, where Jesus attacks the scribes for similar sorts of behaviour as they attempt to out-shine each other and dominate the people.

Some Thoughts**Offering****Doxology**

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
praise him, all creatures here below,
praise him above, ye heavenly host,
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.***

Prayer of Dedication**Prayers for Peace**

Ross Lorenz

Bruised and black cloud shed heavy tears on Flanders’ fields.
Graveyards in which we buried the young of a generation.

And God wept for these were his children

Bruised and black clouds shed heavy tears on Korean, Chinese,
European, American and Australian lives in the Korean war.

And God wept for these were his children

Bruised and black clouds shed heavy tears on the cities of Syria. Cities shrouded in the desolate dust, camps wreathed in the smoke of human cremations. People whispering: "Please God never again".

And God weeps for these are his children

Bruised and black clouds shroud cities, shopping malls, business centres, refugee camps. People gaze on the devastation wrought by evil on innocence...numbed.

And God weeps, for these are his children

Bruised and black clouds shed tears over a whole world bloodied and bowed by conflict, roads clogged by those who seek a safe place to call home.

And God weeps for these are his children

God of life, drawing life and death together in yourself, uniting the lost and the loving, be among us as we remember.

Guide our praying, lead our loving, cherish our remembering, our God who forgets not one.

Lord's Prayer

Let us say the Lord's Prayer

***Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.***

***Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.***

하늘에 계신 우리 아버지여
 이름이 거룩히 여김을 받으시오며
 나라이 임하옵시며
 뜻이 하늘에서 이룬 것 같이
 땅에서도 이루어지이다.
 오늘날 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주옵시고
 우리가 우리에게
 죄 지은 자를 사하여 준 것 같이
 우리 죄를 사하여 주옵시고
 우리를 시험에 들게 하지 마옵시고
 다만 악에서 구하옵소서
 대개 나라와 권세와 영광이
 아버지께 영원히 있사옵나이다. 아멘

Closing Hymn: Seek ye first (TiS 745, Seek ye first, Karen Lafferty)

Blessing and Sending Out

Christ is life!

Let us live
 with perception and discernment,
 aware that we only ever see things partially

Our service has ended

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ

Going Out: Father bless us (TiS 781, Kookaburra, Robin Mann)

Musical Postlude

Organist:

Jeanette Steer