



**Second Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, June 23rd, 2019**

**“On Giants’ Shoulders: The Grace of Change”
Forty Second Anniversary of
the Uniting Church in Australia
and Refugee Week**



Today we begin the long period of “ordinary time” in the Christian lectionary – the readings set down for each week. Ordinary Time is not meant to be ordinary, but to be a period of growth and development where we deepen our understanding of what it means to be Christian in the modern world.

To sum it all up, these last weeks of Christian festivals – Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity – we have heard about the Christian and human vocation: to become co-creators with God, embracing our dignity and worth. Today, with that lens still present, we focus upon the dynamism of Christian faith: its openness to the future and its creativity in seeing God and the world in intelligent and innovative ways.

GATHERING

Announcements

Preparation: The Lord is my light (TiS 747, Jacques Berthier, Taize). We sing as a mantra.

The Lord Is My Light

Theme A

The Lord is my light, my light and sal - va - tion:
 God I trust, in God I trust. The

Fine

Invitation to Worship

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

We light the Paschal Candle

We have lit the candle celebrating the beginning of the journey in
 “ordinary time”. That this will be anything but ordinary!

Hymn: Love Divine (TiS 217(i), Hyfrydol, Charles Wesley)

Inviting God In

Grounded in 1 Kings 8: 22-23, 41-43 , used in Epiphany centred upon the idea of the Temple as the heart of religious, social and political life in ancient Israel; the place where Yahweh is asked to be present, in order that his people maintain a “centre of gravity”, an understanding of their identity: who they ultimately are.

Come through the doors of our house, Lord.
 Let us admit you whether we feel
 worthy or unworthy,
 holy or sinful,

faithful or wavering.

Come through the doors of our house just the same.

Come to the house of our hearts, Lord,
 our searching hearts, our contented hearts,
 our caring, giving, loving hearts,
 our needy, angry, anxious hearts,
come to the house of our hearts in joy or pain.

Come to the house of our days, Lord,
 our happy days, our hurting days,
 our bitter days, our bright days,
 our struggling, sorrowing, sad days,
come to the house of our days in sun or in rain.

Come to the house of our world, Lord,
 our wondrous world, our wounded world,
 our teeming world, our tortured world,
 our singing, shouting, crying world,
come to the house of our world, and let us be changed.

Amen

The Peace

LET'S HEAR THE WORD

Some Insights about God in Places that we Seldom Look

...there is one story, which contains all others; and the centre of that story is the perpetually displaced God who addresses us from the edge of human affairs, who has chosen the place of the excluded. Our engagement as Christians must be determined by the question of who or what our culture is currently forgetting, since it is there that we are likely to find God waiting for us. This cannot therefore be a prescription for liberalism or for conservatism. The more fashionable a cause, the more likely that the crucified God has moved on; the more embedded a practice or trend, the more likely that God is elsewhere. There is nothing to be recommended except the daily development of the mind of the crucified, what some recent theologians like James

Alison (following Rene Girard) have come to call 'the intelligence of the victim'.

Rowan Williams

Archbishop's Speech to the International Bonhoeffer Congress, Poland, Friday 3rd February 2006

The Centurion, though a man of power, is still an outsider. Rather than making him arrogant and hostile, his outsider status develops empathy in him. He is anxious on behalf of one who has no power, no voice, no authority at all. And so, he appeals to Jesus. God's power glows, glimmers, ignites upon boundaries.

Suzanne Guthrie

At the Edge of the Enclosure

In a higher world, it is otherwise, but here below, to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.

John Henry Newman, An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine

1 Kings 19:1-4,8-15a: Elijah flees to Horeb (New International Version – NIV)

Gill Lloyd

In 1 Kings 19 we have the aftermath of Elijah's supposed resounding victory in the contest with Jezebel and the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18). Just when Elijah should have been triumphant, he receives a message telling him of Jezebel's murderous intentions, and he is 'afraid' (v. 3). He immediately flees south to the city of Beer-sheba. From there he goes alone into the wilderness of the Negev Desert. His mood is one of absolute defeat and desolation. After all he had done for Yahweh his victory now seems hollow. He has not been given divine protection from the very protagonist he has defeated in the name of Yahweh. He only wants to die: ' . This passage reveals something of the way God interacts with humanity and how Elijah needs to open up to new ways of experiencing and understanding God. It is not just about militant zeal, and religious violence against the enemy Now he learns that which was Elijah's brand but now the word of the Lord, sometimes only discernible in the 'sheer silence', controls his prophetic activity and sustains him in his task.

19 Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

³ Elijah was afraid^[a] and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴ while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."

And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁰ He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

¹¹ The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁴ He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

¹⁵ The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram.

The word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Psalm 42 read responsively

Geoff Dornan

Psalms 42 and 43 are really one psalm. Together the psalms form a lament built on images of water. There is mention of streams, tears, deep, cataracts, waves,

and billows, as well as of thirst and mourning. The first verse embodies the sense of the whole lament. The psalmist, in their longing for God's presence, is like a thirsty animal longing for water in a dry place

- ¹ As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.
- ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?
- ³ My tears have been my food
 day and night,
***while people say to me all day long,
 "Where is your God?"***
- ⁴ These things I remember
 as I pour out my soul:
***how I used to go to the house of God
 under the protection of the Mighty One***
 with shouts of joy and praise
 among the festive throng.
- ⁵ ***Why, my soul, are you downcast?***
 Why so disturbed within me?
***Put your hope in God,
 for I will yet praise him,
 my Saviour and my God.***
- ⁶ My soul is downcast within me;
***therefore I will remember you
 from the land of the Jordan,
 the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.***
- ⁷ Deep calls to deep
 in the roar of your waterfalls;
***all your waves and breakers
 have swept over me.***
- ⁸ By day the LORD directs his love,
***at night his song is with me—
 a prayer to the God of my life.***
- ⁹ I say to God my Rock,
 "Why have you forgotten me?
***Why must I go about mourning,
 oppressed by the enemy?"***
- ¹⁰ My bones suffer mortal agony
 as my foes taunt me,

**saying to me all day long,
“Where is your God?”**

¹¹ Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,

**for I will yet praise him,
my Saviour and my God.**

Galatians 3:23-29: moving beyond fundamentalisms (NIV)

Paul's explanations here need to be seen against the problem he is facing. He is very concerned that Christian missionaries have come into Galatia telling the people in the churches which he founded that they must keep all the biblical laws pertaining to Gentiles (and for instance, undergo circumcision). Paul finds this both an intrusion and a rejection of the essence of the gospel which he has been proclaiming. Paul had declared that all that matters was a response of faith to Jesus.

This may sound convincing enough until we transpose it into the key of current debates. Paul was declaring that you could leave large parts of the Bible aside and that you should see it as having its main meaning in what Jesus brought to us. His Christian opponents were appalled. They saw Paul compromising the Word of God - watering down its demands. This was in essence an early expression of Christian fundamentalism. Such fundamentalism vehemently opposed Paul throughout his ministry. Paul knows his position is vulnerable. He certainly was not intending to abandon scripture. *He was interpreting it.* But then how could he declare that the biblical Law no longer applied?

²³ Before the coming of this faith,^[a] we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Luke 8:26-39: Jesus restores a demon-possessed man (NIV)

Barry Lloyd

Luke 8:22-25 tells how Jesus stilled the storm. Our passage is equally dramatic: Jesus defeats the powers of the abyss. These are celebrations of power against power. Luke is retelling these anecdotes which he found in Mark. Here as there they are signs of revolution and change. They belong to a world which framed life's struggles differently from most of us. At its base appears to be an exorcism which invited such elaborations, at first in a strongly Jewish setting where the humour and irony of the elaborated story would make best sense. From there Mark has picked it up and later Luke. Both share the assumption that this was a meeting of the holy and the unholy, a confrontation of evil powers with the Son of God, whom they recognise and try to outmanoeuvre. At all stages of the story, the central theme remains the same: however we imagine the powers that oppress people, Jesus came to bring liberation. We may typify such powers as focused on the individual, but scripture sees them more in collective terms: the power inherent in structures and in political forces. It is an odd anticlimax that the people of the region arrive on the scene, are stunned by the miracle and ask Jesus to go away! Acts of liberation are not always popular.

²⁶ They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes,^[a] which is across the lake from Galilee. ²⁷ When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" ²⁹ For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

³⁰ Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹ And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

³² A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. ³³ When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴ When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, ³⁵ and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus'

feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ³⁶ Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. ³⁷ Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So, he got into the boat and left.

³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ “Return home and tell how much God has done for you.” So, the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Christ

Hymn: The Church’s One Foundation (TiS 457, Aurelia, Samuel John Stone)

Film Clip: “Rev Meets God”

The combative and disillusioned Rev’d Adam Smallbone from St Saviour’s Hackney, meets God on a hill and learns about himself.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Yo-UYCoZ9o>

Some Ideas....

Let’s Give

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 of the People

Rob Mayrick

The one who prays concludes each petition with the words, “May we travel on your shoulders” and we respond, “to see further ahead”

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: And can it be (TIS 209, Sagina, Charles Wesley)

Blessing and Sending Out

Through Jesus
We see beyond ourselves
we sit on giants' shoulders
we see reality and ourselves, more broadly, more generously
Our service has ended.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ

**Sung Blessing (TiS 778, Spanish melody Elise Shoemaker
Eslinger)**

***Shalom to you now, shalom my friends
May God's full mercies bless you my friends
In all your living and through your loving
Christ be your shalom, Christ be your shalom (2X)***

Musical Postlude

Organist:

Tony Ireland

