

Resources for parish worship

9 February, 2014



INTRODUCTIONS

These may be included in the Parish Magazine, in the weekly service sheet, or by the lector as an introduction to the readings.

Isaiah 58 : 1-9a (9b-12)

People ask why God does not reward their faithful attention to religious duties. The prophet's reply is that God's will can only be done in and through people who care about social justice too - obedient people who, in Jesus's words, shed light among their neighbours.

Psalm 112:1-9 [10]

1 Corinthians 2 : 1-12 (13-16)

To his Christian friends, finding it hard to live with happy pagan neighbours, Paul explains how the joy of God revealed in

Jesus Christ does not come from human wisdom or worldly ways, but by Holy Spirit speaking to human spirit. Spiritual perception discloses hidden truths of God's wisdom.

Matthew 5 : 13-20

Just as Isaiah urged a deep concern for other people, Jesus requires us to go beyond our necessary worship and prayer. God cannot bring in his kingdom except in and through people who shed light to their neighbours, whose motives and intentions are deeper than obedience to religious rules.

[Click here to view the readings](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Isaiah%2058:1-9a,%209b-12%0Acw%20Psalm%20112:%201-9,10%0A1%20Corinthians%202:%201-12,13-16%0AMatthew%205:13-20)

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Isaiah%2058:1-9a,%209b-12%0Acw%20Psalm%20112:%201-9,10%0A1%20Corinthians%202:%201-12,13-16%0AMatthew%205:13-20

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

O Lord,
we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people;
that we, who are justly punished for our offences,
may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness,
for the glory of thy Name;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end.

Collect Two

O God,
you know us to be set
in the midst of so many and great dangers,
that by reason of the frailty of our nature
we cannot always stand upright:
Grant to us such strength and protection
as may support us in all dangers
and carry us through all temptations;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Gracious God, we give you thanks for giving to us wholeness and salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us show these forth to others.

P Make me an channel of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring your love; where there is injury, your healing power; and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

L By your Spirit, O Lord, you have made us the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Help us be what you have made us.

P Make me a channel of your peace. Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there's sadness, joy.

L O God, we would burn brightly for you. Give us courage and strength, faith and hope, that we may indeed show the way of salvation to all.

P Master, grant that I may never seek so much to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love with all my soul.

L O God, in and through Jesus the blessed life you want us all to

have is found. Help us to rest and abide in Him and his gospel.

P Make me a channel of your peace. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; in giving to others that we receive; and in dying that we are born to eternal life.

L Gracious God, we pray for these things, and for all the burdens and joys upon our hearts at this time

.... intercessions and petitions.....

L We ask as these things through Christ Jesus our brother and our Lord, saying as he taught us.... Our Father

POST COMMUNION

God of tender care,
in this eucharist we celebrate your love for us and for all people.
May we show your love in our lives
and know its fulfilment in your presence.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

Lord, in your constant goodness
watch over your family.
May we who rely solely
on your undeserved love for us
always be defended by your power.
We ask this through your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Faithful God,
you have called us to be a light shining in the world.
Make us reflect the light of Christ,
so that people see your love and goodness
in our words and actions.
We ask this through your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Almighty and merciful God,
you sent your only Son as the word of life
for our eyes to see and our ears to hear.
Help us to believe with joy
what the Scriptures proclaim.

We ask this through your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Perfect Light of revelation,
as you shone in the life of Jesus,
whose epiphany we celebrate,
so shine in us and through us,
that we may become beacons of truth and compassion,
enlightening all creation with deeds of justice and mercy. Amen.

O God,
you spoke your word
and revealed your good news in Jesus, the Christ.
Fill all creation with that word again,
so that by proclaiming your joyful promises to all nations
and singing of your glorious hope to all peoples,
we may become one living body,
your incarnate presence on the earth. Amen.

To God who welcomes all in love,
let us pray for the good of the church
and the concerns of those in need.
God of every land and nation,
you have created all people
and you dwell among us in Jesus Christ.
Listen to the cries of those who pray to you,
and grant that, as we proclaim the greatness of your name,
all people will know the power of love at work in the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sisters and brothers,
let us lift our hearts in faith
to the one who hears all prayers
and holds close all those in need.
Holy God, you gather the whole universe
into your radiant presence
and continually reveal your Son as our Savior.
Bring healing to all wounds,
make whole all that is broken,
speak truth to all illusion,
and shed light in every darkness,
that all creation will see your glory and know your Christ. Amen.

O God of light,
your searching Spirit reveals and illumines
your presence in creation.
Shine your radiant holiness into our lives,

that we may offer our hands and hearts to your work:
to heal and shelter,
to feed and clothe,
to break every yoke and silence evil tongues. Amen. **Matt 5:13-16**

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

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The Jesus Community

Isaiah 58:1-9a; Psalm 112:1-10; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16; Matthew 5:13-20

Paul's meditation on the crucified Christ leads him to see that his death discloses "what is truly human," a humanity that contradicts the conventional way of the world (verse 11). Such human persons—grafted into the self-giving death of Christ—live differently in the world, according to "the Spirit that is given by God" with "gifts bestowed on us by God" (verse 12).

The other readings illuminate what that new humanity looks like and who we are called in Christ to be. Psalm 112 outlines the conduct of a "righteous person" who is "happy" in a life of Torah obedience. Such persons are "gracious and merciful" (verse 4), "generous" in "justice" (verse 5), "not afraid" in the world (verse 8), and ready to give to the poor (verse 9). Such persons live a life given over to the well-being of community.

A specific dimension of such humanity is voiced in Isaiah 58. The chapter poses the question of "Who belongs?" This prophetic poem tilts completely toward inclusion of those most unlike "us." The new human person practices a large, embracing, notion of the neighborhood.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus designates his community of followers as "salt" (Matthew 5:13) and as "light" (verse 14), the ones who obey the Torah command to love God and to love neighbor. The "righteousness that exceeds" (verse 20) is not about punctilious moralism or self-enhancement through "goodness." Rather, it concerns a reach beyond the self to the neighborhood and the world.

Thus the righteousness of the psalm, the inclusiveness of the prophetic poem, and the new righteousness of Jesus add up to the "mind of Christ" in 1 Corinthians 2:16, the capacity to act and to give, even as Jesus gave himself for the world. Such a human person unmistakably lives against the stream in our society. Clearly the Jesus community is peopled by folk with energy and courage to live beyond "business as usual."

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

What is authentic spirituality? In what ways do we know – and do others experience – that we have a real, vibrant relationship with God? These are the questions raised by the Lectionary this week. In Isaiah a contrast is drawn between the indulgent spirituality of the people, which leaves them disconnected from God and from God's purposes, with the result that they feel no answer from God when they fast and pray, and true fasting and

prayer which is expressed in lives of justice and compassion. In the Psalm, those who live justly and righteously are celebrated, and are assured of God's care. In Paul's letter, we are reminded that God is not known by the usual means that the world tries to find life and goodness, but only in Christ and Christ's crucifixion. It is as we open to God's Spirit that we receive God's presence and power, and that we receive "the mind of Christ" which will inevitably lead us into lives that emulate Christ's selfless service and sacrifice. In the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew's Gospel, we discover that true righteousness is not that of the Pharisees – legalistic, individualistic obedience to law – but is to be light and salt in the world, fulfilling the heart of the law by bringing life and goodness to others, and drawing them into healing and saving knowledge of God. Clearly, for the Lectionary this week, true spirituality is seen in a living, vibrant relationship with God through Christ, and by God's Spirit, which is then reflected and expressed through actions of compassion, justice and service in the world. If we live this kind of spirituality, it will inevitably draw others to this God we serve – and that's a huge bonus for us!

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: It is all too easy to allow our spirituality to become "otherworldly" and disconnected from life's realities. It is all too easy, even for those of us who are committed to justice and compassion in our world, to become like Pharisees who focus on outward, legalistic observances – becoming social justice fundamentalists, if you will – and losing the life-giving relationship with God and the empowerment of God's Spirit that makes us true salt and light – healing, creative, colourful, restoring influences in our world. Yet, as we engage with the systems of our world, we need to keep asking ourselves how we can be those who lead both victims and perpetrators to "give glory to God", to find a real relationship with God for themselves. How do we work with the powerful, the connected, the wealthy, the influential in such a way that they are led into lives of justice and compassion as well? Judgement, self-righteousness, or adopting the world's methods of control, coercion and condemnation will not bring true change to our world. Rather it is as we commit to a cross-embracing way of living, and offer ourselves in service and compassion of all people that we are able to bring something of God's life and justice into being. It is as we commit to authentic, lived righteousness – becoming salt and light in word, action, thought, communication, participation in the systems and processes of our world, and engagement with others – that our different way of living demonstrates the power and wisdom of God, and invites others into this alternative life, while also gently bringing change where it matters.

LOCAL APPLICATION: It is very easy to allow our sense of call to be reduced to becoming the conscience, or the moral watch dogs, of our communities and neighbourhoods. It is easy to point fingers and judge, to identify evil and, like Pharisees, make our religion about separating ourselves from "others" who don't live up to our standards. This can be true for both conservatives and liberals, for both evangelicals and social justice Christians. But, such engagement with the world seldom brings any real change. It is when we are salt and light – those who live out in our own lives what we seek to see in the world – that we make a real difference. In the early days of the apartheid struggle, a group of church leaders went to see the then Prime Minister of South Africa, to challenge him to do away with apartheid. His response was to look at the division and discrimination in the churches and to tell them to get their own house in order before trying to sort out the country. Salt and light people are those who bring flavour and colour, integrity and insight, healing and compassion into the world by the way they live, love and interact. Their influence is felt not through judgement or legalism, but through a life lived with a completely different quality, that touches others with grace and truth and compassion and calls out to the best in them, leaving them longing to live better lives

themselves. This is what it means to let our good deeds be seen so that others will praise God, and it's the only thing that really brings change into the world. As Gandhi famously said: "Be the change you wish to see in the world".

SERMON OUTLINE

I Corinthians 2:1-12

The Proclamation of the Church

In this passage, Paul turns to the message he brought to the Corinthians and how that message was to penetrate their lives. Paul did not want the Corinthians to be gathered around personalities (which brings the disharmony of Ch.1), or around the persuasiveness of a clever message, but around the message of God's reconciling work in Christ. The gathering force of the church would not be human personality or charisma, but the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. Faith's Foundation (vv.1-5)

* Faith is based on the simple proclamation of God's redeeming work in Christ and is empowered by the Holy Spirit -- not human eloquence.

* Paul's confidence was not in himself, but in the message and in dependence on the ministry of the Spirit.

2. Faith's Wisdom (vv.6-9)

* It is not as though there is no wisdom in the message of Christ. It is a wisdom that transcends human understanding. (*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. - Isa. 55:9*) Also: (*And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. -Phil.4:7*)

* The wisdom of God is a "revealed" wisdom.

3. Faith's Revelation (vv.10-12)

* The wisdom of God is a "revealed" wisdom and as such is received only when ministered by the Spirit of God. Otherwise, the wisdom of redemption would be available only to the "wise". As it is this wisdom transcends human wisdom and is "given" and "received" instead of "sought after" and "attained".

* Thus the proclamation of the church is the responsibility of the church's preachers and teachers. The *results* of the proclamation are the responsibility of the Spirit of God and are sovereign

Matthew 5:13-20

You are the salt of the earth...

excerpt from the **Sermon on the Mount** - the Xian in the world.. Many withdrew from facing problems & persecutions - living in isolation as hermits - e.g. one who lived on Mt Sinai for 50 yrs refusing to see pilgrims - "*he who is visited by mortals cannot be visited by angels* - ct life of Jesus!

cf **Simon Stylites** - lived for 37 yrs on top of a 60ft column...

cf **Eusebius** - lived for 3yrs at the bottom of a well...

ct Jesus asserting the duties of a Xian in the world.... called >

1. to be Salt - *you are the salt of the earth* - intrinsic qualities

a) purity - glistening white - symbolic of purity...

b) providing flavour - essential in cooking...

c) preserving - from rotting & going bad - cf the old salt box in a bygone age... Christians are called to maintain Christian standards and morality in world ...

2. to Shine:- *you are the light of the world...* Shine therefore for Jesus who is the true *Light - the light of the world...*

a) Stand out for Jesus - *a city on a hill - cannot be hidden*

b) Shine out for Jesus - *don't light a lamp & put it under a bowl - put it on a stand & it gives light to everyone in the house* -common sense! **Jesus bids us shine** - reflect His light!

3. to Serve - *let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds & praise your Father in heaven* – a favourite expression of Matt - used 17 times (Lk & Mk once, Jn none).

Be good, be generous! Let the world see to whom you belong & whom you serve by the good things you do.. Good = **kalos** = winsome, attractive... The aim is not to win praise for ourselves - but to bring glory to OUR God! *By Norman Porteus*

Keeping the Faith ~ Matthew 5:17-20

This theme focuses on issue of what Jesus means by saying he came to "fulfill" the law and the prophets. One of the key charges against Jesus would be that he broke the Sabbath law. (See Mark 3:2) In effect, Jesus says, "In no way will God's law or the intent of the scripture be denied. I will take you to a more complete fulfillment of the law that the teachers of the law give you."

[You will want to read and pick from the remaining five occurrences of the term "law and prophets to develop this theme. See: Matt 7:12, 22:40, Lk.16:16, Acts 13:15, Rom. 3:21]

Mt. 7:12 The heart of keeping the law is to treat others the way you want to be treated.

Mt. 22:40 Love God, neighbor and self and you will keep the law.

Lk. 16:16 The preaching of the "Good News" of Christ bring fulfillment,

Acts 13:15 Paul Preaches after a reading of "the law and the prophets".

Rom. 3:21 The capstone! The righteousness we need / long for comes through Jesus Christ. It is in his life, ministry, death and resurrection that we discover the authentic fulfillment of the law and the prophets!

Jesus comments that the righteousness of his followers must be greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees. The latter followed the "letter of the law". They might be seen as those who ask the question seen on a bumper sticker, "How much can I get away with and still get to heaven." The followers of Jesus are more interested in pleasing God than they are in simply placating God. They are interested in getting to the *heart* of the matter while the scribes are stuck on the *head* of the matter.

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

Corinthians

The Text this Week

<http://www.textweek.com/pauline/1cor2.htm>

Sermon by Calvin Miller a well published Southern Baptist (USA) but anyone who quotes Frederick Buechner is worth considering. Rich in illustrations.
http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/miller_4505.htm

Matthew

God's view of who you are: you are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world. Mt 5:13-14.
<http://www.lectionarysermons.com/feb0799.html>

CHILDREN

Children's address - two to consider on Mt 5:16
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/letyourlightshine.html>
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/pluggedin.html>

Worshipping with children
<http://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2014/01/year-fifth-sunday-after-epiphany-fifth.html>

Light to the world
Scroll down for children's address
<http://www.spirit-net.ca/sermons/a-or05se.php>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

[A Charge To Keep I Have](#)
[Take Time To Be Holy](#)
[Being Of Beings, God Of Love](#)
[Take My Life And Let It Be](#)
[God Of Justice](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)
Priceless Vision: [Chord Chart](#); [Mp3 Download](#) (*Amazon.com Mp3 Store*)
[May The Words Of My Mouth](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)
[Lord, Reign In Me](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)