

The 2nd Sunday after Trinity

Sunday 21st June 2020



The Collect for 2nd Sunday after Trinity

Lord, you have taught us
that all our doings without love are nothing worth:
send your Holy Spirit
and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues,
without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Romans 6: 1-11

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore 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.

⁵ 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. ⁶We 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. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 10:24-39

²⁴“A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; ²⁵it 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! ²⁶“So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³²“Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; ³³but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my

Father in heaven. ³⁴“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵For 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; ³⁶and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household. ³⁷Whoever 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; ³⁸and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.



Reflection from Revd Helen:

In today's Gospel reading from Matthew, Jesus tells us no less than three times not to be afraid: 'have no fear' (verse 26); 'Do not fear' (verse 28); 'do not be afraid' (verse 31). Jesus is telling us that if we fear God, we need fear no one and nothing else. Last Sunday I had

the joy and privilege of celebrating the Eucharist at the high altar in St Oswald's Church to mark the first anniversary of my ordination as priest. I am prompted to share something of this with you in this reflection. The only person physically present with me in St Oswald's was my husband Steve (as we live in the same household!). As I contemplated this in advance, I wondered how different it would feel to be presiding at the Eucharist in this way with no congregation present. Would it in some way feel less "real" perhaps? There is no doubt that when presiding at the Eucharist there is power in having the prayers of God's people with us. But in church that morning I was struck by an overwhelming sense of reverence and "fear" for God, and of the weight of responsibility that rested in my hands as I prepared to consecrate the bread and the wine. These particular words from the hymn, '*Be still*' were very much on my heart – "*Be still, for the presence of the Lord, The holy One, is here; Come bow before him now with **reverence** and **fear***". I felt deeply something of what it is to "fear" God. This was not fear in the sense of being frightened of God, but rather, the complete opposite. It is fear in the positive sense of an understanding of who God is in relation to us. The fear of God that I experienced as I stood before the altar in St Oswald's can best be described as reverence, honour, awe and respect for God's power, majesty and ultimate holiness. The enormity of God and who He is was in sharp contrast to the smallness of me – and yet (verse 30) "even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³So do not be afraid....."

"Do not be afraid" is one of the most frequent commands in the Bible. There is such a thing as healthy fear, of course – the fear that is a basic survival mechanism and protects us from danger, but there is also unhealthy fear. This has been described as:

F-alse *E*-vidence *A* – ppearing *R*-eal.

When we overestimate the danger and underestimate our ability to deal with it.

As I looked out at the empty pews in St Oswald's on Sunday, I imagined our Church family from across our three churches gathered together for worship. I pictured you all there and as I did, in my mind's eye I saw tongues of flame dancing above your heads like those first disciples at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon them in all its fullness. The unseen Spirit of God that dwells in us is the spirit that produces the healthy fear that is the fear of God. It is this fear of God that is the antidote to all other fears we experience in life. In these continuing days of uncertainty and distress, may we be people of courage who in the strength and power of his indwelling Holy Spirit, fear God alone.

May God bless you all.



*With greetings to you all from
The Rector and Revd Helen*

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