

Good News Daily

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Sunday, September 20

Luke 3:7-18 *Bear fruits worthy of repentance. And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?"* (vv.8, 10 NRSV)

Every parent has probably uttered to his or her child after he/she has shoved another child, "Tell him you're sorry." And every parent has probably witnessed a reluctantly uttered, "I'm sorry," followed a few minutes later by another shove. Is it enough to just say we're sorry?

According to this passage from Luke, we need to bear the fruits of repentance, not just say the words of confession. But what does this mean? When the crowds, tax collectors, and soldiers ask this of John the Baptist, he tells them to live generously and justly. In Acts, Saul's (the persecutor) fruit was to proclaim Jesus until he was persecuted.

Every week in the Anglican tradition, we pray the confession:
"Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen." (*Book of Common Prayer, p.352*)

Within it is a call to bear the fruits worthy of repentance, to delight in God's will and walk in His ways so that His name is glorified. How can you, this week, not just say, "I'm sorry" to God, but "bear fruits worthy of repentance"?

2 Kings 4:8-37; Psalms 93, 96; Acts 9:10-31

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for Southern Brazil – (Brazil) The Rt Revd Humberto Maiztegue
DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Christopher Episcopal Church, Rantoul, The Rev. Steven Thorp, Vicar and the Rev. Ann Alley, Assisting Deacon; Tura Parish, Tanzania, Rev. Ernest Lugenzi; The Mission of Jesus Source of Life, District of Comas, Lima, Peru, Ms. Edith Varillas. Lay Minister; Wedding anniversary of the Rev. Harry G. and Betsy Newman, Bellevue, WA; Birthday of Mary Ann "Marv", wife of the Very Rev. Richard A. Swan, Decatur.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Birthday of Linda Stawick.

Monday, September 21

Matthew 5:21-26 *"So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift."* (vv.23-24)

Jesus takes reconciliation seriously, even to the point that we should pursue it *before* worship! He says, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 22:37-39). Loving God and loving our neighbor cannot be separated. We cannot worship God while warring against a fellow believer.

Why is this? In forgiving and being forgiven, we experience more deeply how God forgives us. For God to seek reconciliation with us was costly. If God is willing to make this sacrifice, how can we not also sacrifice to pursue reconciliation?

In Anglicanism, before we take Eucharist, we pass the peace. More than shaking someone's hand or introducing ourselves, the peace provides space for us to seek reconciliation before we come to the Table. The next time you come to a service, take a few moments to ask the Lord if there is anyone who has something against you. If the answer is yes, seek them out and pursue reconciliation *before* you come to Eucharist. In this, you will find a deeper experience of God's forgiveness and reconciliation.

2 Kings 5:1-19; Psalm 80; 1 Corinthians 4:8-21

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Southern Highlands – (Tanzania) The Rt Revd John Mwela

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Feast of Title, St. Matthew's, Bloomington.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Pray for our mission in the community, our members, and our clergy.

Tuesday, September 22

1 Corinthians 5:1-8 *Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* (vv.7-8)

The weekly service in the Episcopal Church opens with this prayer:

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

We cannot hide our hearts from God. God sees through our pretenses to the thoughts of our hearts. Psalm 78:37-38 says, "Their heart was not steadfast toward him; they were not true to his covenant. Yet he, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them; often he restrained his anger, and did not stir up his wrath." God sees the betrayal of our hearts. In the Old Testament, He restrained His wrath. But we live in an age when His wrath has already been spent upon Jesus. Because of Jesus, even our hearts can be cleansed and we can worship in sincerity and truth. Rejoice friends and celebrate the feast!

2 Kings 5:19-27; Psalm 78:1-39; Matthew 5:27-37

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Southern Nyanza – (Kenya) The Rt Revd James Ochiel

DIOCESAN CYCLE: The Rev. David J. Boase, Godfrey, ordination to the Priesthood.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Birthday of Theresa Garrison.

Wednesday, September 23

Psalm 119:97-120 *Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Accept my offerings of praise, O LORD, and teach me your ordinances.* (vv.105, 108)

Worship in the Anglican tradition is a play in two acts, a symphony in two movements—the Word of God and Holy Communion.

In the first movement, we hear God's Word—through the readings from the Old Testament, the Psalms, the New Testament, and the Gospels; through the preaching of the sermon, and lastly, through the recitation of the Nicene Creed. In this, we are reminded that in a crooked and deceitful world, God's Word is our plumb line—it is the truth by which we live.

Through the second movement of Eucharist, we walk through the greatest truth of our lives—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is the Word Made Flesh, fully revealing God in everything that he did, but most of all in his death on the cross. Even if we do not understand God's laws and ordinances, we can live according to His will simply by modeling our lives after Jesus.

May our worship this week be accepted as an offering of praise and instruct our hearts in the ways and will of God, that we may live accordingly.

2 Kings 6:1-23; 1 Corinthians 5:9—6:8; Matthew 5:38-48

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Southern Philippines – (Philippines) The Rt Revd Danilo Labacanacruz Bustamante

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord, bless the work that we do; bless it, and keep us in your power.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Birthday of Carol Genge.

Thursday, September 24

Psalm 147 *Praise the LORD! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.* (v.1)

Why do we sing at church? Because it is fitting to offer a song of praise to the Lord. Notice that the verse does not say, “If you have a beautiful, melodious voice, offer a song of praise to the Lord.” It doesn’t say, “If you have perfect pitch, offer a song of praise to the Lord.” No! Even when we cannot carry a tune, we sing boldly to the Lord. Even when our voices crack and tremble, we sing praises to the Lord. Even when the person in the pew in front of us grimaces at our lack of vocal ability, we sing boldly to the Lord. Why? Because our God is gracious and a song of praise is fitting. So sing!

2 Kings 9:1-16; Psalms 83, 146; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Southwark – (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun; Southwark – Croydon – The Rt Revd Johnathan Clark; Southwark – Kingston – The Rt Revd Richard Cheetham; Southwark – Woolwich – The Rt Revd Michael Ippgrave

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Wedding anniversary of the Rev. Paul R. and Christine Dicks, Pewaukee, WI; Birthday of the Rev. Cn. Dr. George E. Pence, Edwardsville; Birthday of Gina, wife of the Rev Charles Reischman, Littleton, CO.

ST. MATTHEW’S: Birthday of Geoffrey Kohlhase.

Friday, September 25

Matthew 6:7-15 *“Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”* (vv.9-13 NIV)

In the Episcopal Church, we pray the Lord’s Prayer a lot. It is, after all, the way that Jesus instructs us to pray. Sometimes, even as my mouth forms the words of this prayer, my thoughts wander to other things—what I need from the grocery store, the conversation I need to have with an employee. But Jesus did not mean for this prayer to be recited by rote. It is not the words themselves that are important, but the meanings.

- “Our Father” – we have an intimate relationship with God
- “Who art in heaven” – though our Father, God is still ruler
- “Hallowed be your name” – a petition that God be glorified and His name be known
- “Your Kingdom come...” – a prayer for the goodness, justice, and peace of God’s kingdom to come to the world now
- “Give us today...” – the recognition of our dependence on God’s provision
- “Forgive us...” – the reminder that we are reconciled to God and called to be reconcilers
- “And lead us not ...” – not only is God our provider, but our protector

“For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.” May we say these words each week with thoughtfulness and sincerity.

2 Kings 9:17-37; Psalm 88; 1 Corinthians 7:1-9

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Southwell & Nottingham – (York, England) The Rt Revd Paul Gavin Williams; Southwell & Nottingham – Sherwood – The Rt Revd Anthony Porter

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Trinity, Jacksonville, Consecration of present church building, 1921.

ST. MATTHEW’S: Pray the we might walk in the way of the Cross.

Saturday, September 26

Psalm 90 *So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands—O prosper the work of our hands!* (vv.12, 17 NRSV)

“Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Thanks be to God.”

After the Word is proclaimed and the Table cleared, the people are sent from worship into the world with these words. We are not sent as if nothing happened, but we are sent into the world reminded that we are God's People and we have a task—to reveal Christ to the world.

In the margins of my Bible, I jotted this note next to Psalm 90:12—"Teach us to count our days so that we may fill them only with the things that matter, knowing how short those days are." Whether I spend my days working on a computer, washing dishes, or leading Bible studies with college students, my prayer is that I will live my life loving God completely with the small things and the big decisions. May we all "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord" this week!

2 Kings 11:1-20a; Psalm 87; 1 Corinthians 7:10-24; Matthew 6:19-24

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Southwest Florida – (Province IV, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Dabney Smith

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Bartholomew's, Granite City, Consecration of present church building, 1906; Birthday of Terry, wife of the Rev Can. Robert B. Koehler, New Braunfels, TX.

ST. MATTHEW'S: That we might rest in preparation for service in God's House.

by Kim Koi

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