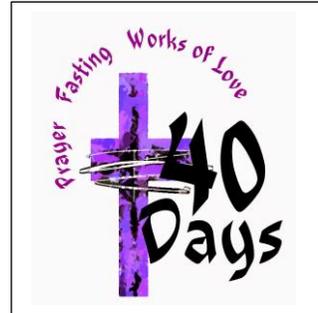


LENT THREE



Sentence: God so loved the world that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3: 16

Readings:

Exodus 20: 1-17

Psalm 19: 7-14

Acts 1: 1-5

neighbor

1 Corinthians 1: 22-25

Collect:

Father of mercy, alone we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves. When we are discouraged by our weakness, strengthen us to follow Christ, our pattern and our hope; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, on eGod, now and for ever. Amen,.

The Holy Gospel: John 2: 13-22

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵ Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for

your house will consume me.”¹⁸ The Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?”¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”²⁰ The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?”²¹ But he was speaking of the temple of his body.²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Sermon:

(I thank Rev. Margaret Morrison, Deacon; Lake of Bays who is our guest preacher this Third Sunday of Lent)

She is preaching on the Old Testament Lesson so that is included here for you as well as the Gospel.

20 Then God spoke all these words:

² I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³ you shall have no other gods before^[a] me.

⁴ You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation^[b] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷ You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

⁸ Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work. ¹⁰ But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

¹² Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³ You shall not murder.^[c]

¹⁴ You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵ You shall not steal.

¹⁶ You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.



17 You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Exodus 20: 1-17

I am currently taking a course which has been concentrating on Exodus. Rev Judie, unaware of this, asked me to be a guest preacher on "The Ten Commandments" as written about in Exodus. I was delighted to be asked and pleased to share my understanding of some of what we have been discussing in our virtual classroom.

When Exodus 20 begins, Israel has been freed from slavery in Egypt and is in the wilderness. They reach Sinai after many challenges, all of which have been relieved by God. God makes a covenant with Israel, (an agreement between God and his people in which God makes certain promises and requires certain behaviour from them in turn). God's covenants are always mutual. Israel will be God's cherished possession given the people "obey God's voice and keep God's covenant." In this context God's introduction to the commandments is very significant..."I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." God redeemed his people and now speaks personally to each individual. "God spoke all these words" Notice God does not say commands the following but rather spoke these words. Also notice "I am the Lord your (singular) God. The commandments are directed to each of us as tools to shape our life as an individual.

In this context the commandments, I believe, are a gift from a redeeming and loving God. They are given to shape the life of those in relationship with God. They are a prescription for a prospering community of flourishing families and individuals. Their appeal is a deeper grounding in faith and motivation for righteous behaviour.

Some believe that the Ten Commandments were not transmitted in a "never to be changed " form. There is a belief that they were meant to adapt to new times and places. In Deuteronomy 6:5, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your might." Jesus gives the first commandment such a positive formulation! He opens the first

commandment to greater enlightenment, more helpful in view of changing times. In Deuteronomy 5:21 “wife” is exchanged with house and given her own separate mention, perhaps, I like to believe, a reflection of a changing role for women in that culture.

While we cannot delve into each commandment here today, I would like to mention just a couple of other things. “You shall have no other gods before me” This refers to idolatry and not just to carved images. We each need to self-examine for idols such as power, wealth, pride and the like. Martin Luther often used a phrase such as: We must fear, love and trust God above all else. That is the ongoing challenge before each of us.

There are many questions around “The Sabbath”. Why is it not on the 7th day to replicate the days of creation and the day God rested? As you know, the Jewish faith has maintained the 7th day as their Sabbath. Converted Gentiles were persecuted by the Romans for resting on the Sabbath. This moved Christians to celebrate their day of rest on the Lord’s Day to commemorate the Resurrection. It also marks the first day of Creation and “the light”, just as Jesus is the light and a new beginning. Celebrate God as the Creator (Saturday) and the Redeemer (Sunday). The day is not critical but pausing to seek to be with God intentionally is vital for our Christian health.

My prayers are with you all. Be safe and well in this difficult time. Serve the Lord and study his word...it will be a balm in this time of Covid. Warm regards and blessings Rev. Margaret.

Prayer:

Praise to you our Rescuer and our Redeemer. You brought us out of bondage through the mighty and finished work of your Son, Jesus Christ. As we consider the surety and perfection of your law, we give thanks that you gave your law on Sinai to an already rescued and delivered people. Keep us from the temptation to believe that we are delivered based on our keeping of the law. Instead, make us secure in your gracious work that now sets us free to keep your law as the way of wisdom and life. May we live by faith in this truth, “For freedom Christ has set us free.” Together, help us stand firm and no longer submit to a yoke of slavery. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen. *(from prayerbook of Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church)*

Lenten Praise of hymnody: # 253 O Glorious Day (Book of Common Praise)

O glorious day when God's love overflowed
And all its beauty on the earth bestowed; The
Spirit gave all creatues life and health
And on them breathed the life of God's own self
In all creation, in each tiny flower
In every life we see God's living power.
More glorious still that day of storm and flame
When God on Sinai's mount to Moses came; when Israel, from the waters
brought a shore
Received its calling and God's holy law.
For on that day of God, the gear I AM
The Spirit on the the chose people came.

Blessing:

May the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and your minds fixed on the love of God and of His Son Jesus Christ, and the blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always!

- Judie+