

THE SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT

7th March 2021 – Third Sunday in Lent

Introduction

Our readings this week are deeply concerned with the law. Exodus 20 is one of the two renderings of a the decalogue, or ten commandments. These still seem today an unarguable statement of good moral law. Much of the wider Old Testament law (traditionally consisting of 613 commandments, mostly in Leviticus) was the civil and ceremonial law of ancient Israel and is not usually held to apply to Christians today. But the decalogue stands. We may quibble about the detailed observance of the sabbath (especially where it affects non-Christians), but no person of goodwill doubts the importance of rest for all. The Bible is often condemned for failing to condemn slavery: and yet the abomination of slavery for those who would love others, as they would themselves be loved, is implicit in verse 2 (and indeed the whole story of the Exodus).

Psalms 19 is generally used from verse 7, as a celebration of God's law. But we should not overlook the first six verses, which remind us firmly that God's glory is proclaimed not only in His Word of scripture, but by every detail of His marvellous creation. It is surely no accident that verses 1 to 6 appear in the same psalm as the explicit praise of the law in verses 7 to 14. We are intended to see that God teaches us by the way in which he has created too.

For more on the wisdom that Paul is talking about and which Jesus applies in the cleansing of the Temple, have a look at, or listen to, this week's message.

Please pray for...

Dorothy (St Cuthbert's), in Furness General Hospital following her serious fall last week.

Lent group (reading chapter 4 for this week)

A reminder of the details needed to access our Lent groups, which are held on Tuesday at 7.30pm and on Wednesday at 2pm and 7.30pm. You don't need attend the same session every week, or indeed attend every week at all. Following the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4235751855?pwd=VklnMDhaVkZhTGZYa0lBZ0lRdlldqUT09>

Or use the Zoom app, or website zoom.us/join with the following login details:

Meeting ID: 423 575 1855

Passcode: 5RKuy8

READINGS AND PRAYERS

Collect

Almighty God,
whose most dear Son went not up to joy
but first he suffered pain,
and entered not into glory before he was crucified:
mercifully grant that we,
walking in the way of the cross,
may find it none other than the way of life and peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Exodus 20:1-17

A reading from the Book of Exodus

Then God spoke all these words:

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

⁴You 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. ⁵You 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, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

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

⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹For six days you shall labour and do all your work. ¹⁰But 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. ¹¹For 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.

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

¹³You shall not murder.

¹⁴You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵ You shall not steal.

¹⁶ You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

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

This is the Word of the Lord.

Psalm 19:7-end

¹ The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

² Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.

³ There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;

⁴ yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,
⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,

and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and nothing is hidden from its heat.

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;

the decrees of the Lord are sure,
making wise the simple;

⁸ the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;

the commandment of the Lord is clear,
enlightening the eyes;

⁹ the fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring for ever;

the ordinances of the Lord are true
and righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey,
and drippings of the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² But who can detect their errors?
Clear me from hidden faults.

¹³ Keep back your servant also from the insolent;
do not let them have dominion over me.

Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

I Corinthians 1:18-25

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the church in Corinth

¹⁸ For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

This is the Word of the Lord.

John 2:13-22

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to St John

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 market-place!' 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Prayer after Communion

Merciful Lord,
grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil,
and with pure hearts and minds to follow you,
the only God;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.