



Pentecost 18

4 October 2020

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Psalm 19:14

We come once again to reflect on and recall Jesus, God's faithful one.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

We come with praise for Jesus, the man for others.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

We come to listen to Jesus, the teacher.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

We come to follow Jesus, the crucified and risen one.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

Sustaining God, be one with us and be clear to us through your voice of truth.

Walk within our midst Lord Jesus Christ.

In your Spirit, fellowship becomes our reality even in our separateness and
worship is an act and experience of true communion.

***Come, Holy God, and recreate our lives yet again. This we pray in faith as
your faithful people. Amen***

Hymn 431

*Thanks to God whose word was spoken
in the deed that made the earth.
His the voice that called a nation,
his the fires that tried its worth.*

*God has spoken, God has spoken:
praise him for his open Word.*

*Thanks for God whose Word incarnate
human flesh has glorified,
who by life and death and rising
grace abundant has supplied.*

*God has spoken, God has spoken:
praise him for his open Word.*

*Thanks to God whose word was written
in the Bible's sacred page,
record of the revelation
showing God to every age.*

*God has spoken, God has spoken:
praise him for his open Word.*

*Thanks to God whose word is published
in the tongues of every race.
See its glory undiminished
by the change of time and place.
God has spoken, God has spoken:
praise him for his open Word.*

*Thanks to God whose word is answered
by the Spirit's voice within.
Here we drink of joy unmeasured,
life redeemed from death and sin.
God has spoken, God has spoken:
praise him for his open Word.*

Confession and Assurance

O God, we believe and yet when it comes to the moment of our testing, so often we do not believe.

Our lives are not fully adjusted to the ultimate hope that should be ours through faith and its sharing as your faithful people.

Forgive us and help us in our times of unbelief so that the world around us may see and know the power of faith in our lives and find new hope and certainty in Jesus, the Christ, our risen Lord.

We are fearful in the face of the demands that you make of us in the and tribulations of life, especially at a time such as this when so many old certainties are in question and our reliance on them is no longer to be trusted.

Forgive us and help us in our times of unbelief so that the world around us may see and know the power of faith in our lives and find new hope and certainty in Jesus, the Christ, our risen Lord.

We are tempted to think that we own your love and truth because we are your faithful people and it is those outside our community of the Church who are to be judged for the world's failings which threaten the future of the human race itself and would obviate the demands of love in relation to our neighbours' needs and imagine that what we receive from you will be a reward for our commitment to you and a final reckoning for those without faith.

Forgive us and help us in our times of conceit so that the world around us may see and know the power of faith in our lives and find new hope and certainty in Jesus, the Christ, our risen Lord.

Forgive us when our vision of your truth and the reign of your kingdom is so small and mean-spirited and jealously held within our hands when it cries out to be shared in all the earth.

Forgive us and help us in our times of conceit so that the world around us may see and know the power of faith in our lives and find new hope and certainty in Jesus, the Christ, our risen Lord.

So may we know and receive the endless grace and compassion of the God whom we trust in the Christ among us and with us to the end of time itself.
Amen.

Hymn 432

*Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ the head and cornerstone,
chosen by the Lord, and precious,
binding all the church in one,
holy Zion's help for ever,
and her confidence alone.*

*Here among us where we call you
come, O Lord our God today;
with your gentle loving-kindness
hear your people as we pray,
and your fullest benediction
pour upon us here today.*

*Here bestow on all your people
what we ask of you to gain,
what we gain from you for ever
with the blessed to retain
and hereafter in your glory
evermore with you to reign.*

*Praise and honour to the Father,
praise and honour to the Son,
praise and honour to the Spirit,
ever three and ever One,
one in might and one in glory
while eternal ages run.*

Hebrew Scripture Exodus 20:1-4 , 7-9, 12-20

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour, and do all your work,

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

"You shall not murder.

"You shall not commit adultery.

"You shall not steal.

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

"You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's."

Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die." Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin."

O Lord, may your word live in us
and bear much fruit to your glory.

Non Sequitur



Reflection

Traditionally the Ten Commandments have been the linchpin of the practice of the Christian faith – and also, therefore, the foundation of Western morality and law. But when St. Paul accepted Christianity and saw that the teaching of Jesus calls us to righteousness by faith alone, not by adherence to legalism and, for all his own authority as an Israelite, as one

circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Philippians. 3:5-11

Yes, Paul, with singular clarity, saw and declared what was to become the great Reformation doctrinal affirmation, justification by faith alone. The Commandments have their place, as they did for the Israelites moving on to a new life in the Sinai Desert, as guidelines for the working of communal living. But, as Jesus was to say so tellingly, when he was asked which of the commandments mattered most of all, his unequivocal response was

**"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind.
This is the great and first commandment.
And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.
On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."**

Matthew 22:37-40

Yes; the foundation of God's kingdom is love, not law.

Hymn 699

*A new commandment I give unto you
that you love one another as I have loved you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
By this will others know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another;
by this will others know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another.*

Gospel Matthew 21:33-46

"Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: " 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes'?"

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Concluding Reflection

The Lectionary since Easter – and, therefore, throughout our pandemic experience – has taken us through the myths and legends and historical sagas of the Hebrew Scriptures as they record and present the amazing faith journey of the Israelites into an unshakeable understanding of nationhood and of their God and their commitment to this One. The journey reaches its resolution in the person of a teaching and healing Rabbi who challenges the religious understanding and practice that has evolved in their journey in faith to nationhood, a Rabbi who sees both good and evil in the practices and understandings that have evolved and has fearlessly 'called them out'. As a result the Rabbi is rejected by his own people and brought to his end in the horror and brutality of Roman crucifixion. But this marks a new stage in the ongoing faith journey, a move forward for all humankind. Death itself is

countered for this man by a new experience of life described and experienced, by those who commit to him as resurrection; and, through his resurrection encounter with the Pharisee Paul, the ground-breaking recognition is made that a legalistic understanding of God is to be replaced with a relationship of compassion and love between God and all creation in which humankind is called to the defining role of the good steward and master.

Jesus said to them ...

**" 'The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is marvellous in our eyes'?**

The calling of the faithful has entered a new dimension of understanding and experience of living in the Christ, the risen One of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If we were not in isolation today we would have experienced this, the final reality of faith through the communal sharing of the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ and the call to make this real in our daily living. For Yes, we are the resurrection body of Christ when we fulfil our destiny as God's faithful people. As Paul was to affirm to the Philippian Christians so long ago

**But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind
and straining forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize
of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
Let those of us who are mature think this way,
and if in anything you think otherwise,
God will reveal that also to you.
Only let us hold true to what we have attained.** Philippians. 3:13-16

Hymn 246

*Christ is the world's light, he and no other,
born in our darkness, he became our brother.
If we have seen him, we have seen the Father:
Glory to God on high.*

*Christ is the world's peace, he and no other,
no one can serve him and despise his brother.
Who else unites us, one in God the Father?
Glory to God on high.*

*Christ is the world's life, he and none other;
sold once for silver, murdered here, our brother-
he, who redeems us, reigns with God the Father:
Glory to God on high.*

*Give God the glory, God and none other;
give God the glory, Spirit, Son and Father;
give God the glory, God in man my brother:
Glory to God on high.*

Prayers for Ourselves and Others and Lord's Prayer

O God, we are no more than the tenants in your household,
the ones who hold in trust the fruit of your growing and giving.
Show us what we need for fullness of life and that which is the gift of your
abundant life for others.

***Make clear your way before us, Jesus the Christ.
Inspire us to a truer path, Holy Spirit, and place our lives in
their true perspective within your creation, O God.
Give to us hearts of praise for all you give to us and lives
which demonstrate holiness for the world to see and believe.***

And so we pray in the words you taught us

***Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen***

Hymn 626

*Lord of creation, to you be all praise!
Most mighty your working, most wondrous your ways!
Your glory and might are beyond us to tell,
and yet in the heart of the humble you dwell.*

*Lord of all power, I give you my will,
in joyful obedience your tasks to fulfil.
Your bondage is freedom, your service is song;
and held in your keeping, my weakness is strong.*

*Lord of all wisdom, I give you my mind:
rich truth that surpasses our knowledge to find,
what eye has not seen and what ear has not heard is
taught by your Spirit and shines from your word.*

*Lord of all bounty, I give you my heart;
I praise and adore you for all you impart,
your love to inspire me, your counsel to guide,
your presence to shield me, whatever betide.*

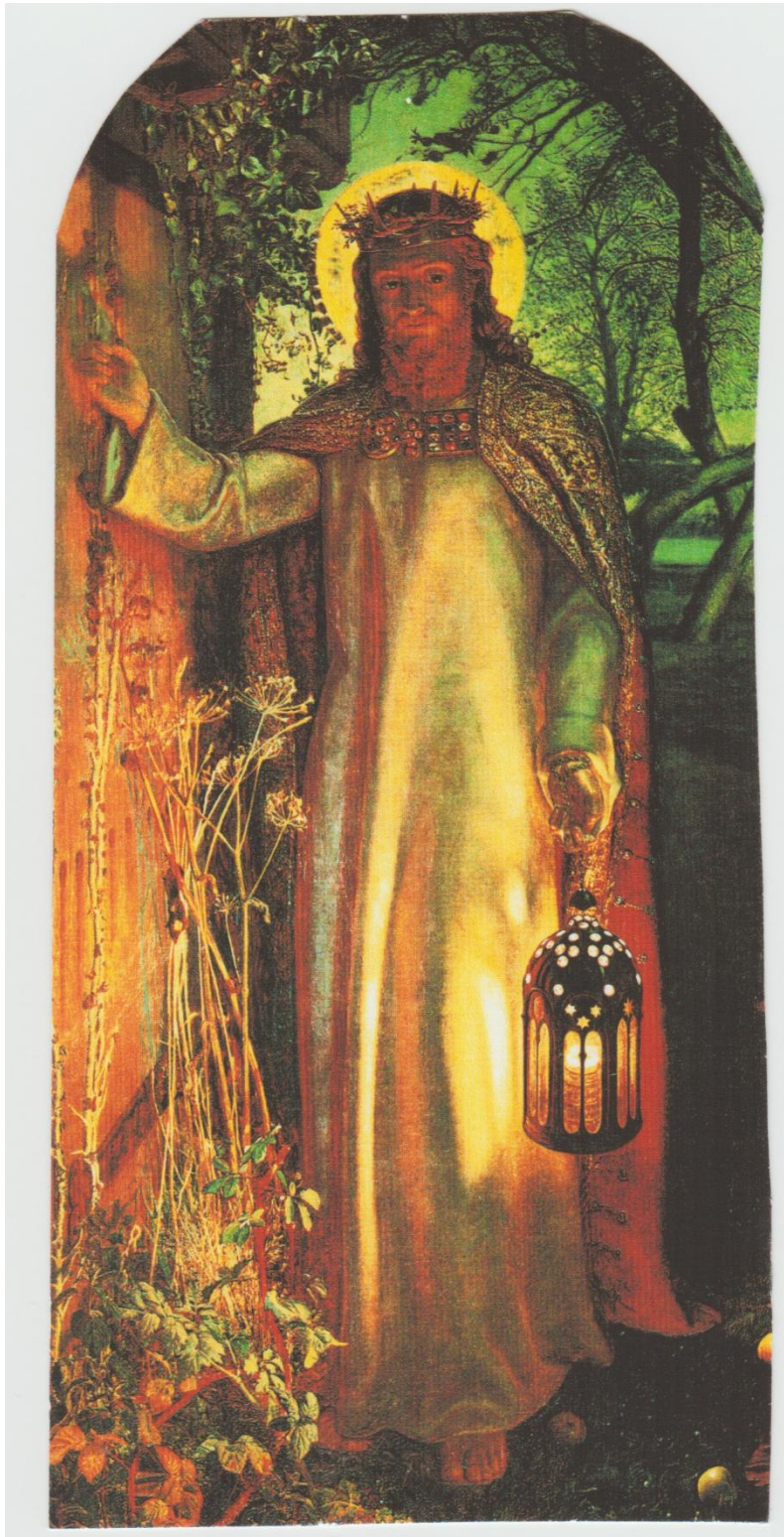
*Lord of all being, I give you my all;
if ever I leave you I stumble and fall;
but, led in your service your word to obey,
I'll walk in your freedom to the end of the way.*

We leave this time of worship rejoicing in all that we have to offer, ready to give that to the world in gratitude for all that we have been given as people of faith

Benediction

So may the life of Christ blossom in the church universal;
may the life of the Spirit green the earth with new life and
a passion for life enabling peace;
and God the Creator refresh our every moment with hope for a
resurrection future and its realisation as the final coming of your
kingdom.

Reverend Graeme Kerr



Holman Hunt Christ the Light of the World

This painting hangs in the Vestry of Keble College Oxford