

Proper 16



Prayer of the Day

God of all creation, you reach out to call people of all nations to your kingdom. As you gather disciples from near and far, count us also among those who boldly confess your Son Jesus Christ as Lord.

Isaiah 58:9b-14

{9b}. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, {10} if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. {11} The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. {12} Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in. {13} If you refrain from trampling the sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; {14} then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

9b-10: Yahweh's favor depends on the conditions contained in two statements. If those conditions are satisfied then Yahweh's favor is assured. "The two 'ifs' here envision a social practice that is built upon genuine sharing of social power and social goods." [1]

9. *the yoke*: Economic oppression: "to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke" (Isaiah 58:6).

pointing of the finger; the speaking of evil: Slander and gossip.

10. *food to the hungry...needs of the afflicted*: Resources used to provide for those who are hungry and in need. See verse 7.

10b-12: Yahweh's favor shows itself in the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and the return of light to the land following the oppression of the exile.

13: Another condition is advanced, keeping the sabbath, not using it to serve one's own interests, or pursuing one's own affairs.

14: The promise for keeping the sabbath is the restoration of the fortunes of the nation, delight in the Lord, power, and the heritage of Jacob. All these are the result of giving up one's own interests as individuals and as a people pursuing God's interests.

Psalms 103:1-8

{1} Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. {2} Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits-- {3} who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, {4} who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, {5} who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. {6} The LORD works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. {7} He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. {8} The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

3. *who forgives all your iniquity...heals all your diseases*: The Psalm is a song of thanks

giving of who has been forgiven and saved from sickness and death. The five participles in verses 3-5 reflects a characteristic of the hymn form.

5. *your youth is renewed like the eagle's*: The power of the eagle as it soars tirelessly is used as a metaphor for renewed vitality after near death.

7. *He made known his ways to Moses...to the people of Israel*: Yahweh's goodness is grounded in his self-revelation to Moses and the people of Israel. That is both the model on which his goodness to individuals is patterned and also the assurance of his goodness to the individual.

8: "Mercy, patience, and goodness are hallmarks of Yahweh's activity. He does not constantly carry on a court case because of failures, he does not bear a grudge.... Yahweh's mercy is revealed above all in its extent and depth by this, that failures are not punished." [2]

Hebrews 12:18-29

{18} You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, {19} and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. {20} (For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned to death." {21} Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear.") {22} But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, {23} and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, {24} and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. {25} See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! {26} At that time his voice shook the earth; but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven." {27} This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken--that is, created things--so that what cannot be shaken may remain. {28} Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; {29} for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

18. *You have not come to something*: The reference is to Mt. Sinai, though it is not specifically mentioned, and the theophany there.

something that can be touched: Exodus 19:12.

a blazing fire: Exodus 19:18; Deuteronomy 5:25.

darkness and gloom: Exodus 19:16.

a tempest: Exodus 19:16.

19. *the sound of a trumpet*: Exodus 19:13, 19.

a voice: Exodus 20:19; Deuteronomy 5:25.

20. *the order that was given, "If even an animal..."*: Exodus 19:12-13, 23. "By referring to this command the author thus implicitly reiterates his earlier (9:8) critique of the old covenant and cult. There sanctity was preserved by exclusion. In the new covenant the situation is different."

21. *Moses said, "I tremble with fear."*: Deuteronomy 9:19.

22. *But you have come to Mount Zion...the heavenly Jerusalem*: "The imagery of the heavenly Jerusalem and the contrast between Sinai and Zion is traditional in Judaism and early Christianity." [3] Mount Zion is paired with Jerusalem. There are eight paired items to which the audience draws near (Zion-Jerusalem; innumerable angels-assembly of the firstborn; God/judge-spirits of the righteous; Jesus/mediator-sprinkled blood. The

pairings are synonymous: Sinai/Zion; angels/firstborn; antithetic: judge/spirits of the righteous; and synthetic: mediator/sprinkled blood).

23. *the firstborn*: The angels who were created before human beings.

24. *the blood of Abel*: "...Abel's blood cried for vengeance while Jesus' blood speaks reconciliation." [4]

the one who warned them on earth: Moses warned the Israelites as they wandered in the desert, but they often failed to heed his instruction.

the one who warns from heaven: The ascended Jesus Christ.

25: The readers are warned not to refuse the "better word" spoken by the blood of Christ.

26-27: A quotation from Haggai 2:6 in verse 26. The image is of the destruction of the created order at the end of time to make way for the "kingdom that cannot be shaken."

27. *the removal of what is shaken*: The "old" heavens and earth are shaken, and therefore removed. What remains is the kingdom of God which is not created.

29. *our God is a consuming fire*: Deuteronomy 4:24. Fire is a metaphor for Yahweh's divine jealousy.

Luke 13:10-17

{10} Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. {11} And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. {12} When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." {13} When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. {14} But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day." {15} But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? {16} And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?" {17} When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

10. *one of the synagogues on the sabbath*: The location of the synagogue is unknown, but the day of the week is critical to the point of the story.

11. *a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years*: "Illness in antiquity was a social as well as a physical phenomenon.... Healing therefore required reestablishing social relationships as well as restoring physical health." [5] "...it is probably sheer chance that the number eighteen appears in this and the foregoing episode (cf. vv. 4, 11, 16), though one cannot deny that it may have served as a catchword-bond for the episodes." [6]

she was bent over...unable to stand up straight: J. Wilkinson identified this as *spondylitis ankylopoietica*, a fusion of spinal joints. [7]

12. *he called her over and said...*: Jesus is frequently asked to heal a person. In this case he spontaneously initiates the healing.

13. *he laid his hands on her*: Jesus both spoke and used a therapeutic touch to heal the woman.

14. *the leader of the synagogue*: The leader of the synagogue seeks to discredit Jesus, but he does not appear to have the authority to silence him altogether.

There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured and not on the sabbath day.: The leader of the synagogue warns the crowd against Jesus.

The rabbinic position on healings was that only those which are necessary to save a life are permitted. Jesus' position with respect to healing on the sabbath is set forth in Luke 6:9, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?" and Mark 2:27, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."

16. ought not...be set free: "Ought" translates the impersonal verb *dei*. "...it sometimes expresses the will of God revealed in the Law (Lk. 11:42; 13:14; 22:7; Ac. 15:5). Jesus clashes with their [*dei*, "ought"] of the Law when in defiance of the Rabbinic halacha. He follows the [*dei*] of the will of God as He knows it (Lk. 13:16, cf. v. 14)." [8]

The translation is somewhat periphrastic. The impersonal verbal particle *dei*, which is translated "ought not," makes it necessary for the realization of God's plan of salvation to free this daughter of Abraham from the bondage which has interfered with her full participation in the community of the Chosen People for eighteen years. It was earlier used in the statement by the leader of the synagogue that work "ought" to be done only on six days, that is six days have been set aside for work (Exodus 20:9).

a daughter of Abraham: As a member of the house of Abraham the woman deserves as much consideration as a farm animal. In Luke 19:9 Zacchaeus is identified as "a son of Abraham." Even a crippled woman and a quisling tax collector are precious in God's sight.

16. Satan: In Luke 4:13 "the devil" departed from Jesus until an opportune time. In 22:3 Satan enters into Judas. Here Jesus overcomes the testing of the woman by Satan.

17. his opponents were put to shame: He calls them "hypocrites," a harsh insult for providing for the humane care of animals while denying such care to human members of the community.

wonderful things: In the Old Testament Yahweh's acts in freeing the people from bondage in Egypt is accompanied by many signs and wonders (Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 11:1, etc.).

Observations: This story appears only in the Gospel of Luke. For a similar story see Luke 14:1-6 which is omitted in the Revised Common Lectionary.

Reflection

In the Gospel Jesus sets the welfare of individuals above religious observances such as the sabbath. In our day we have so thoroughly obscured religious observances that we will probably have difficulty feeling the full force of Jesus' dismissal of "religious" activity in favor of real care for brothers and sisters, and, in keeping with the story of the Good Samaritan, love for our enemies who are also our neighbors. To feel the force of Jesus' teaching we should select our most important religious practice and put the love of a crippled woman ahead of that. The first lesson forbids "trampling the Sabbath," that is, ignoring our religious observances to pursue our own interests (business, shopping, recreation), so what we can dispense with for the sake of others we may not dispense with for the sake of our own interests. Interesting...no?

Hymns [9]

With One Voice (e.g. 762v), *Hymnal Supplement* 1991 (e.g. 725s) and *LBW* (e.g. 32).

E=Entrance; D=Hymn of the Day; I=First Lesson, P=Psalm; II=Second Lesson; G=Gospel

175 -E--Ye Watchers and Ye
 517 -E--Praise to the
 510 -I--O God of Youth
 302 -II--Jesus, Your Blood

337 --II--Oh, What Their
 744s --II--Lord Jesus, From
 393, 423, 493, 315

Prayers of the People [\[10\]](#)

P or A: Called to follow in Christ's footsteps, we walk prayerfully, appealing to our God in Jesus' name, responding together, "Amen."

A: That we may accept your call to follow Christ, and live lives worthy of the name "Christian". In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A: That we may offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe, being mindful of God in all that we do--reading, preaching, praying, singing, and communing together. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A: That we would cherish our children and protect them from wickedness and abuse, by providing loving communities in which these innocents may grow. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A: That the sick and the dying in our midst may be healed. We pray for _____ , and those whom we name in our hearts... . In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A: As the crippled woman was freed by the healing power of Jesus Christ, so may we be freed from every earthly bondage--the desire for wealth and power, and the need to rise above our neighbors at their expense. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

P: Heavenly Father, teach us to pray. Incline our hearts, minds, and words to your will, trusting that you will respond to that which we ask. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Or [\[11\]](#)

Presider or deacon

Hearing the word of the Lord, let us pray for all who suffer and hurt.

Deacon or other leader

For this holy gathering, for the people of God in every place, and for all who seek the Lord.

For justice and righteousness among all peoples.

For students and teachers, and all those returning to their studies.

For abundant fruits of the earth, and for safety from violent storms.

For the sick and the suffering, travelers and those on vacation, prisoners, captives, and their families, and all those in danger and need.

For our city and those who live in it, and for our families, companions, and all those we love.

For those who rest in Christ and for all the dead.

Lifting our voices with all creation, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

To you, O Lord.

Presider

God the judge of all, who lays in Zion a precious stone, hear the prayers we offer this day and spread your kingdom among all peoples; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Notes

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[1] Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998, p. 192.

[2] Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989, p.292.

[3] Harrold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989, p. 372.

[4] Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964, p. 233.

[5] Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, p. 363.

[6] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., p. 1010.

[7] J. Wilkinson, "The Case of the Bent Woman in Luke 13:10-17," *Evangelical Quarterly* 49(1977)195-205.

[8] Walter Grundmann, "[dei]" *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (ed. by Gerhard Kittel. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964, II:22.

[9] <http://www.worship.on.ca/text/rclc0001.txt>

[10] http://www.worship.on.ca/text/inter_c.txt

[11] <http://members.cox.net/oplater/prayer.htm>