

Daily Office Devotional, Wednesday, November 3, 2010
Proper 26, the week of the twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost
The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings

AM Psalm 72; PM Psalm 119:73-96

Ecclus. 43:23-33; Rev. 16:1-11; Luke 13:10-17

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, Book of Common Prayer

Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, Book of Common Prayer

Compline (Night Prayer), Page 127, Book of Common Prayer

Daily Office Gospel, 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.

David's Reflections

Jesus' healing of this woman sparked a controversy in the synagogue with those who believed such vocational work as healing should be confined to the six days before God rested and created the Sabbath (Genesis 2). Jesus believed that healings like this one were harbingers of God's ultimate sabbath, the future time when the entire earth and all people would enter perpetual sabbath, the rest of God's final salvation.

If God created in six days and rested on the seventh, then our future salvation would mean God could rest along with us from his efforts to

reclaim and transform us. All creation would go into complete rest, eternal shalom, and God would join that rest.

We tend to focus, as did the religious leaders, on what is wrong about us and our world, as we understand wrong. We see incredible suffering, we encounter people whose beliefs and values feel so far off the mark, and we live in a world in turmoil and chaos. Our world strives after a transformation it cannot seem to effect. If we keep the focus on the negative, the wounded, the broken, we may well miss the multitude of ways in which God's future for us is breaking out in anticipatory moments.

Every healing, every reconciliation, every binding up of the broken comes about because of God's giving love. Each such moment anticipates the quality of our future with God when all healing and all binding up of brokenness will have been accomplished. (See Revelation 7 and 21 for poetic-mythical visions of that salvation.)

If we were to focus on each moment of healing, deliverance, salvation, and transformation we encounter, we would be seeing repeated inbreakings of God's future. Our entire focus would shift and we would have reasons to celebrate God's ongoing working in the world and to throw ourselves more fully into that work. Raindrops from the monsoon of God's coming kingdom are falling all about us. It's time to dance in the rain.

Proper 26, The Sunday closest to November 2

Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift that your faithful people offer you true and laudable service: Grant that we may run without stumbling to obtain your heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

A Collect for Grace

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, 100)

For the Sick

Heavenly Father, giver of life and health: Comfort and relieve your sick servants, and give your power of healing to those who minister to their needs, that those (or N., or NN.) for whom our prayers are

offered may be strengthened in their weakness and have confidence in your loving care; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP, 260)

A Prayer for Light

O Lord God Almighty, as you have taught us to call the evening, the morning, and the noonday one day; and have made the sun to know its going down: Dispel the darkness of our hearts, that by your brightness we may know you to be the true God and eternal light, living and reigning for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP, 110)

A Collect for Mission

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. Amen. (BCP, 101)