

**Daily Office Devotional, Tuesday, January 5, 2021**  
**The Eve of the Epiphany**  
**The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.**

Daily Office Lectionary Readings (BCP, 940)

AM Psalm 2, 110:1-5(6-7)

Joshua 1:1-9; Heb. 11:32-12:2; John 15:1-16

Eve of Epiphany

PM Psalm 29, 98

Isa. 66:18-23; Rom. 15:7-13

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 Epistle, Romans 15:7-13

7 Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. 8For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, 9and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, 'Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name'; 10and again he says, 'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people'; 11and again, 'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him'; 12and again Isaiah says, 'The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.'

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

David's Reflections

The American poet Edwin Markam wrote three short poems entitled "Epigrams." The second, entitled "Outwitted," reads: \*

He drew a circle that shut me out--  
Heretic, a rebel, a thing to flout.  
But Love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle that took him in!

We celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany tomorrow. Today's epistle expresses some of the themes of Christ's manifestation to Israel, especially the theme of God's inclusive missionary love. Jesus constantly stretched the boundaries of acceptance to include those the strictly religious had ostracized. He kept drawing circles that took in those who had been shut out. He even sought to include those strictly religious persons whose circles were smaller (See Luke 14.).

Paul, the author of today's epistle, was a Pharisee, the sect of Jewish laity most concerned about those circles and boundaries. His conversion to Christianity produced a values reversal. The person who persecuted Christianity because of its inclusiveness became one of the staunchest advocates for including nonJews without requiring that they become Jewish. (See Philippians 3 for his own account of his values reversal.)

How have your values been reversed by your faith in Christ? In what ways do your beliefs and values put you at odds with the popular culture and perhaps with some within the church itself? Paul found himself at odds with other Jewish Christians who held on to those old values (Galatians is his most overt polemic against their perspective.)

The name of the church we launched in Richmond, VA in 2002, All Souls, speaks not only to the feast day of November 2, the Feast of All Faithful Departed, but also to the spirit of that community. That name was chosen before public worship began because the people believed in gathering all who had any hint of a religious or spiritual hunger. Whether others within the Christian community felt comfortable about who attends was of no concern. Whether the larger culture approved was of no concern. All Souls affirmed a circle-enlarging Jesus. May we all seek to make our circle ever larger.

\*Edwin Markham, cited in *Guideposts*, September 1993, p. 32.

*Collect of the Second Sunday after Christmas Day*

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 214)

*A Collect for the Renewal of Life*

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 99)

*Of the Holy Spirit*

Almighty and most merciful God, grant that by the indwelling of your Holy Spirit we may be enlightened and strengthened for your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 251)

*In the Order of Worship for Evening*

Almighty, everlasting God, let our prayer in your sight be as incense, the lifting up of our hands as the evening sacrifice. Give us grace to behold you, present in your Word and Sacraments, and to recognize you in the lives of those around us. Stir up in us the flame of that love which burned in the heart of your Son as he bore his passion, and let it burn in us to eternal life and to the ages of ages. *Amen.* (BCP, 113)

*A Collect for Mission*

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 100, 257)