

**The Sunday Missive – July 10, 2022**  
**The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost**

**Hymn 390 Praise to the Lord, the almighty**

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation;  
O my soul, praise Him, for he is thy health and salvation:  
Join the great throng, psaltery, organ, and song,  
Sounding in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord; over all things he gloriously reigneth:  
Borne as on eagle-wings, safely his saints he sustaineth.  
Hast thou not seen how all thou needest hath been  
Granted in what he ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy way and defend thee;  
Surely his goodness and mercy shall ever attend thee;  
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,  
Who with his love doth befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!  
All that hath breath join with Abraham's seed to adore him!  
Let the "Amen" sum all our praises again  
Now as we worship before him.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXhxbEjfxxc&t=10s>

**The Collect of the Day**

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **Deuteronomy 30:9-14**

Moses said to the people of Israel, "The Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your soil. For the Lord will again take delight in prospering you, just as he delighted in prospering your ancestors, when you obey the Lord your God by observing his commandments and decrees that are written in this book of the law, because you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

"Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe."

## **Psalm 25**

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you\* ***Let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph over me.***

Let none who look to you be put to shame\* ***Let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.***

Show me your ways, O Lord\* ***And teach me your paths.***

Lead me in your truth and teach me\* ***For you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.***

Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love\* ***For they are from everlasting.***

Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions\*  
***Remember me according to your love and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.***

Gracious and upright is the Lord\* ***Who guides the humble in doing right and teaches his ways to the lowly.***

All the paths of the Lord are love and faithfulness\* ***To those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.***

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVG\\_kyizE7I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVG_kyizE7I)

### **Colossians 1:1-14**

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be

prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

### **Hymn 660 O master let me walk with thee**

O Master, let me walk with thee in lowly paths of service free;  
Tell me thy secret; help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.

Help me the slow of heart to move  
By some clear, winning word of love;  
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,  
And guide them in the homeward way.

Teach me thy patience; still with thee in closer, dearer company,  
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,  
In trust that triumphs over wrong,

In hope that sends a shining ray  
Far down the future's broadening way,  
In peace that only thou canst give,  
With thee, O Master, let me live.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mE\\_OgZRipZQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mE_OgZRipZQ)

### **Luke 10:25-37**

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

### **Monkeys All - Proper 10C**

Perhaps you've heard the Cuban proverb: *Aunque la Mona, en la vesta de seda; mona se queda.* "A monkey dressed in silk... is still a monkey."

Although we are not likely to refer to one another as monkeys, we might do well to look for a level of identification with the proverb, in order to avail ourselves of its wisdom. Especially when the scientific community has taken firm steps to end the use of chimpanzees as laboratory subjects. The exception is for psychosocial research, whereby other primates can teach us about ourselves. Thus even among the most secular elements of society, our kinship with our tree-swinging, cousins of ours is being increasingly considered as we look for ways to make ourselves more comfortable and happy in life.

We're not monkeys, silkily dressed or otherwise, but it's a good idea to be a teensy bit less arrogant about our triumphant

primacy in the animal kingdom. Perhaps it might serve to make us ever so slightly more capable of listening to what the ancient stories would have us understand about godliness. We can dress ourselves up in wondrous silken clothes, great achievements, or richly complex religious piety, but we are still, at our simplest core, maybe not monkeys, but certainly just humble beings – no more and no less significant than the rest of God’s Creation. Whenever we exaggerate our importance, we obscure and obstruct the plans God has made.

We are the only species that regularly kills its own, not for food, but out of fear and loathing, revenge and spite. We are the only species that has created and maintains an environment of regular and avoidable violence. We have been unable to admit to each other the roots and ongoing propellants of this violence, let alone diminish, much less control it. We are slaves to the laws of violence – the violence from which God in Christ is longing to set us free. As such, we are far more absurd, hypocritical and pointless than any monkeys ever were. Left to our own devices we can still be fearful, greedy, spiteful beings – far more powerful and dangerous than the rest of God’s Creation.

The story we just heard is one of Jesus’ most powerful and straightforward attempts to convey the will of God on the subject of our relative importance in the big scheme of things. As always, it is through the power of story that Jesus conveys wisdom and allows us a glimpse of perfection, but are we able to listen, absorb and allow this story to work on us? *The Good Samaritan* seems plain enough: Don’t be like the two other fellows: too busy to help the injured man; be like the one who helps, who goes the extra mile to care for a stranger. Of course, all this is right and good, but what would Jesus have us do differently by virtue of this story? Is there anything else to learn other than: “When you see someone in need, don’t ignore them?” How can this help us escape the horrifying cycles of violence to which we are so achingly prone?

In the time and context of the Gospel writings, the word Samaritan was a marker – code – for wrongness, badness and undesirability. So the contrast is not just between some temple officials and a nondescript citizen; the contrast is between normal, legitimate, mainstream people and someone utterly unworthy of consideration – an unspeakable wretch. As is so often the case, Jesus makes this *persona non grata* the hero of the story. We are being asked to wholly revolutionize our idea of heroism and model behavior.

Furthermore, there are a few, possibly good reasons why the other two men don't stop for the injured man: the dangers of the road, the possibility of ritual defilement, etc. They are not patently evil or unreasonable in their choice to pass on by. They have their responsibilities, and so they have their rationales. What they lack is the perspective – the holistic vision if you will – that Jesus both represents and demands.

We have heard “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, man nor woman, we are all one in Christ Jesus.” This story is the embodiment of these declarations, and then some. It's not that the Samaritan is better than the others; he's nobody. Or he's anybody. Who he is doesn't have any significance. The point is, he does not discriminate when it comes to compassion.

A Rabbi asked his students how they could tell when night was ended and day was on its way back. “When you see an animal in the distance, and you can tell whether it is a sheep or a dog?” suggested one. “No,” answered the Rabbi. “Aha! It is when you see a tree in the distance, and you can tell whether it is a peach or a fig tree!” declared another. “No.” “Well then what is it?” they demanded. “It is when you look upon the face of any woman or man and can tell that they are your sister or brother, no matter who they are. Because unless and until you can do that, it will always still be night.”

Today's psalm has a good monkey connection too. The teachings of Confucius, roughly contemporary with the psalmist, both several hundred years before Jesus, include a tradition of monkeys as moral models for ourselves. We are more familiar with these characters as the *Sanbiki no Saru*, the "three mystic apes" of the Tendai Buddhist culture of Japan. *Mizaru*, with eyes covered to symbolize blindness to evil, *Kikazaru*, whose covered ears means deafness to evil, and *Iwazaru*, whose covering hand prevents evil speech. Originally, there was a fourth, *Shizaru*, whose arms were crossed so that (like Tabitha the Deacon), she could do no evil. *The Analects of Confucius* admonish the reader to neither look, nor listen, nor speak, nor make any movement that is contrary to propriety. The implication is that one must see, hear, speak and do only good. Together they form a framework for both an ethical and faithful life.

In our stunningly oblivious way, we in the West have managed to, not only forget about the true meaning of these monkeys, but also turn them into something completely different: a cynical representation of the human proclivity for studied ignorance, and thus tolerance, and thus complicity in evil. But that is not what Confucius had in mind, not by a long shot. In Psalm 135 we have a mirror of his true meaning, expressed in terms of idolatry: "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have eyes, but see not, ears have they, but they hear not, neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them, and so is everyone who trusts in them." In other words, they neither see, nor hear, nor speak any good, so all that's left to them is evil.

The Samaritan is good, not because of his background, or his style or location of worship, or his status in the social hierarchy. He is good because he sets aside all the reasons for not helping the beaten man and instead sees his plight, hears his cries, speaks to him gently, and does something to help.

If we would be subjects of a loving God; if we would be followers of a living Christ; if we would attempt to order our lives according to the inescapable truths and joyously uncomfortable wisdom in the stories Jesus tells, must we not admit and accept that every social calculation, every excusable discrimination, every rationale we have for passing by on whatever other side of the roads we travel, including the road of perpetual violence unaddressed, is known (and yes forgiven) by that same God? Must we not ponder the truth that our ways of living egregiously waste the time and grace and glorious gifts we have been given; and that each time we stand aside and let the violence and neglect continue, we confound our very existence as small, monkey-like wonders of creation? We must stop it, or our children will be lost.

### **Hymn 657 Love divine, all loves excelling**

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down,  
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;  
Visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive;  
Suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be alway blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,  
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee:  
Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUJvvjEPS6I>

OR

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVmwJK6GcC4>

## **Borderlands**

Through all the evening,  
All the virginal long evening,  
Down the blossomed aisle of April it is dread to walk alone;  
For there the intangible is nigh, the lost is ever-during;  
And who would suffer again beneath a too divine alluring,  
Keen as the ancient drift of sleep on dying faces blown?

Yet in the valley,  
At a turn of the orchard alley,  
When a wild aroma touched me in the moist and moveless air,  
Like breath indeed from out Thee, or as airy vesture round Thee,

Then was it I went faintly, for fear I had nearly found Thee,  
O Hidden, O Perfect, O Desired! O first and final Fair!

Louise Imogen Guiney