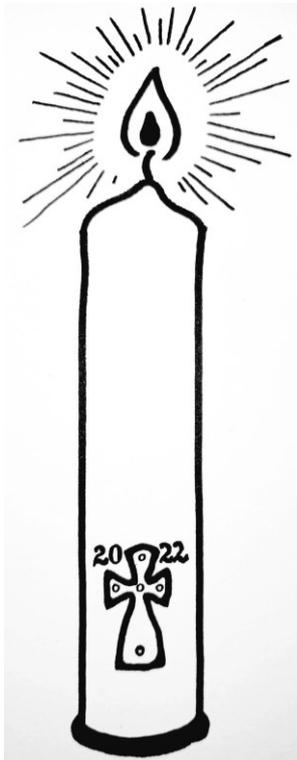


Materials for Virtual Worship - Sunday, 15 May 2022

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Please use this material with the Easter order
for Worship at home for the Linton Team of Churches



Clip Art by Ally Barrett

Collect

Almighty God,
who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ
have overcome death and opened to us the gate
of everlasting life:
grant that, as by your grace going before us
you put into our minds good desires,
so by your continual help
we may bring them to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Readings

Acts 11:1-18

Peter's Report to the Church at Jerusalem

Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, saying, 'Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?' Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, 'I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed

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animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat." But I replied, "By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth." But a second time the voice answered from heaven, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, "Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved." And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?' When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, 'Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.'

John 13:31-35

The New Commandment

When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, "Where I am going, you cannot come." I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

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Reflection John 5: 1-9

Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Thirty-eight years is a long time to sit on your mat. Every day is the same. Waiting. Watching. Hoping. Not much changes. Sitting on his mat has become a way of life for the man in today's gospel. His life is stagnant. He's unable to see that the deep well of life is within him. He's convinced that life will bubble up outside of him, over there, in that magic pool of water. So, he sits on his mat waiting, watching, and hoping that things will change.

There was a belief that this pool of water called Bethzatha had healing properties and that it could change one's life. It was said that every now and then an angel would stir the water, the water would begin to bubble, and the first one in the water would be healed. The man in today's gospel won't get up off his mat until he sees the first bubble. He is living an 'as soon as' life.

'As soon as the water bubbles then I will get up off my mat. As soon as I get to the water my life will be better. As soon as I get into the water my problems will be fixed.'

The pool of Bethzatha is an illusion. It convinces us that our life is nothing more than our circumstances. It deceives us into believing that life is to be found outside ourselves. It tricks us into living an 'as soon as' life. Most of us know what that is like. We say to ourselves or maybe even out loud to another, 'As soon as this or that happens everything will be better. I'll be happy. My problems will go away. I'll be satisfied. All will be well.'

The pool of Bethzatha has a strong attraction for us. Children often say, 'As soon as I get big, grow up, am an adult' It continues throughout our life. 'As soon as'

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I graduate, get a job, get a better job;

I get married or get out of this relationship;

I have more time, more money, a better house;

He changes the way he acts;

I lose ten pounds, get in shape!!

‘As soon as ...’ You can fill in the blank with almost anything. The problem is there will always be another pool of Bethzatha. Meanwhile life has been put on hold. The pause button has been pushed. We sit on our mat, self-imprisoned by the circumstances of our life.

The imprisonment is so great that when Jesus asks the man, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ the man doesn’t even say, ‘Yes.’ Instead, he offers circumstances and excuses. ‘I have no one to put me in the water. When the water bubbles others get there first’

I’m not suggesting that the circumstances of our lives are irrelevant or have no effect. That’s just not true. They do affect us. We are, however, more than the circumstances of our life. Life is not to be found outside our various situations or circumstances but within them. To believe something other than this is to live constantly looking for the next pool of Bethzatha.

Jesus does not help the man get into the water. He comes to him on his mat, the same mat and situation the man so wants to escape and speaks words of life and resurrection. ‘Get up off your mat!’ To quote Jesus a bit more accurately, ‘Stand up, take your mat and walk.’ The man does not leave his mat behind. It goes with him. His circumstances are real. The difference is he now carries them. They no longer carry him.

Jesus doesn’t change our outer circumstances. He changes us. He calls us into a new way of being, seeing, acting, speaking, thinking. When we stand and rise to that new life, we discover the circumstances have

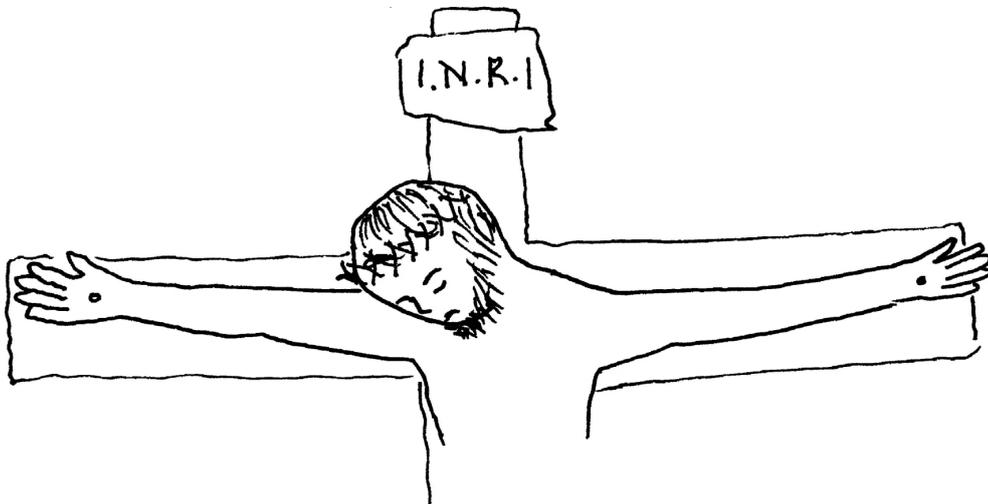
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somehow changed. That doesn't necessarily make life easy or mean we no longer have to deal with the circumstances of life. It makes our circumstances more manageable, and we engage them from a different place and position. The pool of Bethzatha is drained of its power over us. There is freedom where there was once imprisonment. Inertia gives way to creativity. Once stagnant waters now bubble with new life.

The life Jesus offers does not happen 'as soon as ...' It happens in this place, at this time, in these circumstances. Are you sitting on your mat? Are you looking for a pool of Bethzatha? 'Stand up, take your mat and walk.' **Amen**

Lindi Kent



Clip Art by Ally Barrett

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I Danced In The Morning (Lord Of The Dance)

1 I danced in the morning
When the world was begun
And I danced in the moon
And the stars and the sun
And I came down from heaven
And I danced on the earth
At Bethlehem
I had my birth

Chorus

*Dance then wherever you may be
I am the Lord of the Dance said He
And I'll lead you all wherever you may be
And I'll lead you all in the Dance said He*

2 I danced for the scribe
And the Pharisee
But they would not dance
And they wouldn't follow me
I danced for the fishermen
For James and John
They came with me
And the Dance went on

Chorus

3 I danced on the Sabbath
And I cured the lame
The holy people
Said it was a shame
They whipped and they stripped
And they hung me on high
And they left me there
On a Cross to die

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Chorus

4 I danced on a Friday
When the sky turned black
It's hard to dance
With the devil on your back
They buried my body
And they thought I'd gone
But I am the Dance
And I still go on

Chorus

5 They cut me down
And I leapt up high
I am the life
That'll never never die
I'll live in you
If you'll live in me
I am the Lord
Of the Dance said He

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Earth, earth, awake; your praises sing: Alleluia!

1 Earth, earth, awake; your praises sing: *Alleluia!*
Greet with the dawn your risen King: *Alleluia!*
Bright suns and stars, your homage pay: *Alleluia!*
Life reigns again this Easter Day: *Alleluia!*

2 All nature sings of hope reborn: *Alleluia!*
Christ lives to comfort those who mourn: *Alleluia!*
First fruit of all the dead who sleep: *Alleluia!*
Promise of joy for all who weep: *Alleluia!*

3 Winter is past, the night is gone: *Alleluia!*
Christ's light, triumphant, pales the dawn: *Alleluia!*
Creation spreads its springtime bloom: *Alleluia!*
Life bursts like flame from death's cold tomb: *Alleluia!*

4 Praises we the Father, Spirit, Son: *Alleluia!*
Praise we the victory God has won: *Alleluia!*
Praise we the Lamb who reigns above: *Alleluia!*
Praise we the King whose rule is love: *Alleluia!*

We Have A Gospel To Proclaim (Fulda)

1 We have a gospel to proclaim
Good news for men in all the earth
The gospel of a Saviour's Name
We sing His glory tell His worth

2 Tell of His birth at Bethlehem
Not in a royal house or hall
But in a stable dark and dim
The Word made flesh a light for all

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3 Tell of His death at Calvary
Hated by those He came to save
In lonely suffering on the cross
For all He loved His life He gave

4 Tell of that glorious Easter morn
Empty the tomb for He was free
He broke the power of death and hell
That we might share His victory

5 Tell of His reign at God's right hand
By all creation glorified
He sends His Spirit on His church
To live for Him the Lamb who died

6 Now we rejoice to name Him King
Jesus is Lord of all the earth
The gospel-message we proclaim
We sing His glory tell His worth

At the Lamb's high feast we sing

1 At the Lamb's high feast we sing
Praise to our victorious King,
Who hath washed us in the tide
Flowing from His pierced side;
Praise we Him whose love divine
Gives His sacred blood for wine,
Gives His body for the feast,
Christ the victim Christ the priest.

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2 Where the Paschal blood is poured,
death's dark angel sheathes his sword;
Israel's hosts triumphant go
through the wave that drowns the foe.
Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed,
Paschal victim, Paschal bread;
with sincerity and love
eat we manna from above.

3 Mighty Victim from the sky,
Hell's fierce pow'rs beneath Thee lie;
Thou hast conquered in the fight,
Thou hast brought us life and light.
Now no more can death appal
Now no more the grave enthrall:
Thou hast opened paradise,
And in Thee Thy saints shall rise.

4 Easter triumph, Easter joy,
These alone do sin destroy;
From sin's pow'r do Thou set free
Souls new-born, O Lord, in Thee.
Hymns of glory songs of praise,
risen Lord, toThee we raise;
holy Father, praise to Thee,
With the Spirit ever be.

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The strife is o'er the battle done

1 The strife is o'er the battle done;
now is the Victor's triumph won;
O let the song of praise be sung:
Alleluia.

2 Death's mightiest pow'rs have done their worst,
and Jesus hath his foes dispersed;
let shouts of praise and joy outburst:
Alleluia.

3 On the third morn he rose again
glorious in majesty to reign;
O let us swell the joyful strain:
Alleluia.

4 Lord, by the stripes which wounded thee
from death's dread sting thy servants free,
that we may live, and sing to thee:
Alleluia.

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Closing Prayer

Eternal God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:
grant us to walk in his way,
to rejoice in his truth,
and to share his risen life;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

Amen.