

Lessons for 3rd Sunday after Epiphany – January 22, 2023

Collect

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Isaiah 9:1-4

There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice for you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 27:1, 5-13

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?

The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?

One thing have I asked of the Lord; one thing I seek;

that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life;

To behold the fair beauty of the Lord

and to seek him in his temple.

For in the day of trouble he shall keep me safe in his shelter;

he shall hide me in the secrecy of his dwelling and set me high upon a rock.

Even now he lifts up my head

above my enemies round about me.

Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an oblation with sounds of great gladness;

I will sing and make music to the Lord.

Hearken to my voice, O Lord, when I call;
 have mercy on me and answer me.
You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face."
 Your face, Lord, will I seek.
Hide not your face from me,
 nor turn away your servant in displeasure.
You have been my helper; cast me now away;
 do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.

Second Reading: I Corinthians 1:10-18

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles – the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to proclaim "Repent, for the kingdom

of heaven has come near.” As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea – for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Service of Morning Prayer Epiphany 3 – January 22, 2023

Hymn 408

Sing praise to God who reigns above, the God of all creation,
the God of power, the God of love, the God of our salvation;
With healing balm my soul he fills, and every faithless murmur stills:
to God all praise and glory.

What God's almighty power hath made, his gracious mercy keepeth;
by morning glow or evening shade his watchful eye ne'er sleepeth.
Within the kingdom of his might, lo! all is just and all is right:
to God all praise and glory.

Let all who name Christ's holy Name give God all praise and glory;
let all who know his power proclaim aloud the wondrous story!
Cast each false idol from its throne, the Lord is God, and he alone:
to God all praise and glory.

BCP - Page 40 - Greeting

Prepare ye the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

BCP – Pages 41 – Invitation to Confession

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his Holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship him, let us kneel or sit in silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

BCP – Pages 41-42 – Confession and Absolution

*Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep,
we have we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts,
we have offended against thy holy laws,*

*we have left undone those things which we ought to have done,
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.*

*But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us,
spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent,
according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord;
And grant, O most merciful father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly,
righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.*

The almighty and merciful Lord, grant us absolution and remission of all our sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit.
Amen.

BCP – Page 42 - Gloria

O Lord, open thou our lips.
And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.*

BCP – Pages 44-45 – Venite

O come, let us sing unto the Lord;
 let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
 and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great god,
 and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are all the corners of the earth,
 and the strength of the hills is his also.
The sea is his and he made it,
 and his hands prepared the dry land.
O come, let us worship and fall down
 and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is the Lord our God,
 and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
O worship; the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
 let the whole earth stand in awe of him.
For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth,
 and with righteousness to judge the world and the peoples with his truth.

Psalm 27:1, 5-13

First Reading – Isaiah 9:1-4

Second Reading – I Corinthians 10-18

Hymn 531 – O Spirit of the living God

O Spirit of the living God, in all thy plenitude of grace,
where'er the foot of man hath trod, descend on our apostate race.

Give tongues of fire and heart of love, to preach the reconciling word;
give power and unction from above, whene'er the joyful sound is heard.

Be darkness, at thy coming, light: confusion, order in thy path;
souls without strength inspire with might, bid mercy triumph over wrath.

Convert the nations! far and nigh the triumphs of the cross record;
the Name of Jesus glorify, till every people call him Lord.

Gospel – Matthew 4:12-23

Sermon – The Rev. Charles Rowins

BCP – page 53 - The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;

who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,

born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

Was crucified, dead, and buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven.

and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.

From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

*I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

BCP – page 54 – the Lord’s Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

BCP – page 55 – Suffrages A

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;

And grant us thy salvation.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness;

And make thy chosen people joyful.

Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

For only in thee can we live in safety.

Lord, keep this nation under thy care;

And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Let thy way be known upon earth;

Thy saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us clean hearts, O God;

And sustain us with thy Holy Spirit.

Collect for 3rd Sunday of Epiphany

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ, and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

BCP Collect for Sundays

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP Prayer for Mission

Everliving God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

BCP – pages 58-59 - The General Thanksgiving

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we thine unworthy servants
do give thee most humble and hearty thanks
for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men.*

*We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for thine inestimable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.*

*And, we beseech thee,
give us that due sense of all thy mercies,
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful;
and that we show forth thy praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to thy service,
and by walking before thee
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost,
be all honor and glory, world without end. *Amen.**

Announcements

Hymn 717 - America – portions of stanzas 1 and 3

*My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
Long my our land be bright with freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might, great God, our King.*

BCP – page 59 – Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee, and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen.

BCP – page 59 – The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Hymn 382 – King of glory, King of peace

King of glory, King of peace, I will love thee;
and that love may never cease, I will move thee.
Thou hast granted my request, thou hast heard me;
thou didst note my working breast, thou hast spared me.

Wherefore with my utmost art, I will sing thee;
and the cream of all my heart, I will bring thee.
Though my sins against me cried, thou didst clear me;
and alone, when they replied, thou didst hear me.

Seven whole days, not one in seven, I will praise thee;
in my heart, though not in heaven, I can raise thee.
Small it is in this poor sort to enroll thee;
e'en eternity's too short to extol thee.

Dismissal

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins on the 3rd Sunday of Epiphany, January 22, 2023, at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland.

So far in this Season of Epiphany we have been “coming and seeing.” Today we take this journey a step farther. From today’s Gospel (**Matthew 4:19**): “And then he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.’”

Whoa! We’ve moved from “coming and seeing” to “follow me.” As in “I’ve got a job for you.”

Our response might well be “But I came just to see what the job might entail. I’m not sure I’m ready to take the job, much less ‘fish for people.’”

We shouldn’t be surprised by this expectation. Been to a baptism lately? Remember these questions:

- Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness?
- Do you renounce the evil powers of this world?
- Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?
- Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?
- Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?
- Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?

And do you remember this promise:

“I renounce them.” Said multiple times.

Yes, we’ve moved from “coming and seeing” to “having arrived and doing.” Including “fishing for people.”

You all come and go on and off the Island many times in the course of a week. We come to the Island once a week. And what we see occasionally is probably something you take for granted.

One such activity is fishing. And often it is an adult with a child in a small boat fairly close to shore. And many of these occasions are within yards of the church.

A special time for parent and child, and by design very safe. Routine even for you and your families. But always striking when witnessed by a relative stranger. From talking about fishing to actually catching fish.

When a child feels a bite, the parent or big brother/big sister hopes that the fish is small enough for the child to reel in the fish. Small fish, but full experience. A big moment in other words. A memory for a lifetime.

As you and I continue to come and see what the church has to offer, we too gain in confidence. Confidence that, indeed, there is a God who, not only creates the universe, but sustains it with the help of special creatures. Who are those “special creatures”? We are those special creatures. Jesus was The Creature, but as baptized people, we’re in the same boat, aren’t we?

When we think of the Incarnation, we usually think of Big God becoming smaller. Less often do we think of the Incarnation as we becoming larger. As God reaches for us, we reach for God. The result is not size, but insight.

When we reach for God’s Son, which allows us to accept the Son’s offer, we grow in Faith by leaps and bounds. It’s the theological version of feeling that nibble and then that bite.

At that point – fish on hook and reeling in – are we taking credit, or are we saying “Thank you, Lord”?

Well, the metaphors are getting a little carried away, aren’t they? So, let’s stay with the main point: “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.” **(Matthew 4:23)**

Jesus did this. But – and this is the main point, this is our faith – he taught us to help, employing our particular gifts. He taught us how to fish for people. And now, by word and example, we teach others how to fish for people.

Our textbook is the Bible. But, when to engage is up to us. Through our witness, we now call to attention. God has positioned us, as a parent positions a small fishing boat, to engage the sea and its creatures.

Which can be a very challenging assignment. Not for the faint of heart. But we don't gather to complain. Rather we gather, as we do this morning, to get refreshed for the work at hand, God's work. And, at God's direction in His Son Jesus, it is our work as well. Using Isaiah's imagery, we are to help turn darkness to light by sharing burdens.

And, as we carry out this assignment, which at times, for a variety of reasons, is risky, we are strengthened by today's Psalm (**Psalm 27:7**): "For in the day of trouble the Lord shall keep me safe in his shelter ... he will lift up my head above my enemies round about me."

And what do we see when the Lord lifts up our heads? Today's Collect refers to these blessings as "marvelous works." Marvelous, not because we are so ingenious, but because the Lord is with us. We are doing the Lord's work.

And happily so. In the words of Isaiah (**Isaiah 9:2**), "we who walked in darkness have a seen a great light."

Now, "sharing the light," teaching the young how to do likewise, and praising the Lord for both the expectation and the tools to fulfill that expectation, is our privilege and joy. We like the assignment.

When others ask us, "What is it about you and church? Why do you go? In his Letter to the Corinthians (**I Corinthians 1:18**), Paul shared that "the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

There's a shorter, more familiar version: "I like to fish." No more just "coming and seeing." No more cost-benefit analysis. It's time to act" Jesus says. "Follow me!" With an exclamation mark. And, here we are. And happily and gratefully so.

Amen.

