

## Sermon for Morning Prayer: Trinity XX

The Reverend Warren E. Shaw, Priest Associate

Lessons: <sup>1</sup>

Psalm 15. *Domine, quis habitabit?*

**L**ORD, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle? \* or who shall rest upon thy holy hill?

2 Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life, \* and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart.

3 He that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour, \* and hath not slandered his neighbour.

4 He that setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes, \* and maketh much of them that fear the LORD.

5 He that sweareth unto his neighbour, and disappointeth him not, \* though it were to his own hindrance.

6 He that hath not given his money upon usury, \* nor taken reward against the innocent.

7 Whoso doeth these things \* shall never fall.

**G**LORY be to the Father, and to the Son, \* and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, \* world without end. Amen.

**The First Lesson:** Here beginneth the fourth Verse of the ninth Chapter of Ecclesiastes, or The Preacher.<sup>2</sup>

“For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

“Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all

the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

**The Second Lesson:** Here beginneth the sixth Chapter of the Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians.<sup>3</sup>

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.”

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

### **Homily:**

Two weeks ago<sup>4</sup> I preached about the use of the Psalms not only as liturgical texts but as prophecies of Jesus. I pointed out that the Church Fathers, following the Apostles, interpreted the temple to mean Jesus. He is the one in whom

the fullness of God abides and in whom we find forgiveness of our sins.

I also mentioned that Jerusalem is really an icon of the Church and that the holy hill of God is Mount Calvary, on which the one full perfect and sufficient sacrifice was offered for the sins of the whole world. I'm not going to repeat all the background and rationale for that interpretation. I have a copy of that sermon with me in case any one who missed it would like to see it. What I do want to do today is to follow up on that sermon by applying the same hermeneutic to the psalms appointed for today.

Psalm 15 asks the rhetorical question, "Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle and who shall stand on thy holy hill?" The answer is, "He that leadeth an uncorrupt life." That would be Jesus and only Jesus. Everyone else is born into a sinful race and cannot escape the clutches of corruption.

No matter how much he may try and how much good he may do, there is always a flaw in the character of every man, except Jesus. The Psalm continues: "He that doeth the thing which is right." Other people sometimes do the right thing, but only Jesus does what is right every time.

"He that speaketh the truth from his heart." Not only does Jesus speak the truth, He is the truth. Jesus has spoken plainly and openly about who He is and what He requires of those who follow Him. He promises great glory but only after much suffering. He "hath used no deceit in his tongue."

Far from doing anything evil to His neighbor, Jesus commands His followers to love their neighbors and treat them as they themselves would like to be treated.

When He has spoken words of condemnation they have not been words of slander. They have been words that exposed

the dark motivations of people who deceive themselves into thinking that they are righteous. Jesus is the One who has done no evil to anyone and has slandered no one.

The prophet Isaiah speaks of the Messiah as “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” St. Paul talks about how the Savior, having laid aside His divine prerogatives, humbled Himself and submitted to a horrible death.

Jesus speaks of Himself as “meek and lowly of heart”. At the Last Supper, He wraps Himself in only a towel and washes the feet of His disciples. Surely this is the man that “setteth not by himself but is lowly in his own eyes.”

Jesus keeps His promises. He “swareth unto his neighbor and disappointeth him not, though it were to his own hinderance.” He does what He says He will do and does not count the cost.

He is certainly not a loan shark (although there were such people in His day) and He has never offered or taken a bribe. Jesus was a man to whom money meant very little.

“Whoso doeth these things,” says the Psalm, “will never fail.”

We have all had the experience of being let down by people, and by institutions, by our own strength, and by all the other things in this world on which we tend to rely. As St. Paul says, “Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away.” But no one has ever been let down by Jesus. You can trust Him with your life, not only for this world but for the world to come. He is the man that the psalmist calls “blessed”. He is the man that will never fail.

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<sup>1</sup> *Psalms and Lessons for the Church Year* (1943), THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxvi (PECUSA 1928/1943).

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiastes 9:4-10 (KJV).

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 6:1-9 (KJV).

<sup>4</sup> October 11, 2009. This sermon is archived at [www.sermons4layreaders.com](http://www.sermons4layreaders.com), on the second page “Sermons by Other Writers”, under the link “Trinity 20 (Shaw)”.