

SERMON FOR MORNING PRAYER
The Eighth Sunday after Trinity

The Rev. Warren E. Shaw, Priest-in-Charge

Psalms and Lessons:

The Psalms: Psalm 84:¹ *Quam dilecta!*

O HOW amiable are thy dwellings, * thou LORD of hosts!
My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts
of the LORD; * my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a
nest, where she may lay her young; * even thy altars, O LORD of
hosts, my King and my God.

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; * they will be always
praising thee.

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; * in whose heart
are thy ways.

Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well; * and
the pools are filled with water.

They will go from strength to strength, * and unto the God of
gods appeareth every one of them in Sion.

O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; * hearken, O God of
Jacob.

Behold, O God our defender, * and look upon the face of thine
anointed.

For one day in thy courts * is better than a thousand.

I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, * than
to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

For the LORD God is a light and defence; * the LORD will give
grace and worship; and no good thing shall he withhold from them
that live a godly life.

O LORD God of hosts, * blessed is the man that putteth his
trust in thee.

GLORY 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 twenty-fourth Chapter of the First Book of Moses, called Genesis.²

AND Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter. And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor [**NAY-hoar**]. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she

Charlottesville, Virginia

¹ (MCV).

² Genesis 24:1-27 (KJV).

³ Ephesians 5:22-end (KJV).

St. Paul says in today's Second Lesson, from the New Testament, that we who are members of the church are members of the Body of Christ on earth, "of his flesh and of his bones". We were incorporated into Christ when we were baptized. We dwell in Him and He in us when we ingest His Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the altar. So when the psalmist talks about the Messiah walking through the valley of misery and transforming it, he is talking about us as well as about Jesus. He is the Head; we are the Body.

"Blessed is the man ... who going through the valley of misery uses it as a well." You and I are able to do that, not only in our own lives but in the lives of others as well. We are able to speak the word of salvation to those who have no hope. We are able, as members of the Body of Christ, to administer the healing touch to those who are beaten down and afflicted. We are able to do that, not because of any innate power that we have; not because in our hearts are the ways of God or because even because we put our trust in God, but we can do these things because we dwell in Christ and He in us. We are the Body of Christ on earth, "of his flesh and of his bones".

"Without me," says Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, "ye can do nothing". But we are not without Him. He is with us, and He is in us. "The Church is the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and all baptized people are the members." You will find that definition on page 290 in the Prayer Book. Do you believe it?

The Fathers believed it. St. Paul believed it, and because the Apostle believed it he was able to say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me". That's something you can say as well if indeed, you are the people of faith that I believe you to be.

"Blessed is the man", and blessed are you who live in Him and He in you.

—oo0oo—

St. David's Anglican Catholic Church

August 14, 2011

that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed [SHOWD] kindness unto my master. And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel [*beh*-THYOU-ul], son of Milcah [MILL-kuh], the wife of Nahor [NAY-hoar], Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel [*beh*-THYOU-ul] son of Milcah [MILL-kuh], which she bare unto Nahor [NAY-hoar]. She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

The Second Lesson: Here beginneth the twenty-second Verse of the fifth Chapter of the Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians.³

WIVES, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as

Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Homily:

There are two points that I would like to apply to the interpretation of the Psalm appointed for today. The first such point is that in seeking to understand the Scriptures, we should be guided by the Fathers of the Church. The second such point is that we who are members of the church are members of the body of Christ on Earth today.

The Fathers of the Church are men who were not far removed in time from the Apostles themselves. They were preachers and pastors who shaped the practice and organization of the Church and developed the classical Catholic theology that resulted in the Creeds which we recite each Sunday.

Martin Luther turned to the Fathers to refute the innovations of the church of Rome. Richard Hooker refers to them as “the voice of the church,” which he cites as the final authority

when the plain sense of Scripture and the application of reason do not yield certainty.

In seeking to apply the wisdom of the Fathers to Psalm 84, the first thing that captures my attention is the phrase “Blessed is the man”. Wherever that phrase occurs in the Psalms, the Fathers apply it to Jesus.

He is the Man Whose strength is in God. He is the Man in Whose heart are the ways of God. He is the Man Who puts His trust in God. He is the Man Who is blessed.

Modern translators have obscured the connection of Jesus with the man whom the Psalms declare to be blessed. Instead of saying “Blessed is the man”, the New Revised Standard Version says “Happy are they” and “Happy is everyone.” That, of course, is politically correct because it is gender-neutral, and it also has linguistic merit. The Hebrew “Adam”, like its Greek counterpart “anthropos”, does indeed refer to a human without specifying male or female. But the modern translations miss the theological point that Jesus is the ideal Man whose coming the Psalmist anticipates. That point is reinforced in this Psalm by the reference in verse 9 to the Anointed One -- a Messianic title whose counterpart in Greek is “Christos”.

St. Paul refers to Christ as “the second Adam”, “the man of heaven”, and contrasts him with “the first Adam”, “the man of the earth”. St. Augustine refers to that passage from Corinthians in his commentary on the text before us, and he is adamant that the Man Who is blessed, Whose strength is in God and in Whose heart are God’s ways, that Man is none other than Jesus the Anointed One, the second Adam.

Still the modern translators are not totally wrong theologically in making the phrase “blessed is the man” apply to all faithful people of both sexes. That is the second point that I would like to stress.