

Second Sunday in Lent Sunday, March 17, 2019

The Collect: O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 read from the God's Word Bible

Later the Lord spoke his word to Abram in a vision. He said,

“Abram, don’t be afraid.

I am your shield.

Your reward will be very great.”

2 Abram asked, “Almighty Lord, what will you give me? Since I’m going to die without children, Eliezer of Damascus will inherit my household. 3 You have given me no children, so this member of my household will be my heir.”

4 Suddenly, the Lord spoke his word to Abram again. He said, “This man will not be your heir. Your own son will be your heir.” 5 He took Abram outside and said, “Now look up at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” He also said to him, “That’s how many descendants you will have!” 6 Then Abram believed the Lord, and that faith was regarded as the basis of Abram’s approval by the Lord. 7 Then the Lord said to him, “I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land so that you will take possession of it.”

8 Abram asked, “Almighty Lord, how can I be certain that I will take possession of it?”

9 He answered Abram, “Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a mourning dove, and a pigeon.” 10 So Abram brought all these animals to him. He cut each of them in half and laid each half opposite the other. However, he did not cut the birds in half.

11 When birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. 12 As the sun was just about to set, a deep sleep—a dreadful, deep darkness—came over Abram.

17 The sun had gone down, and it was dark. Suddenly a smoking oven and a flaming torch passed between the animal pieces. 18 At that time the Lord made a promise to Abram. He said, “I will give this land to your descendants. This is the land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 27 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 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?

2 When evildoers came upon me to eat up my flesh, *
it was they, my foes and my adversaries, who
stumbled and fell.

3 Though an army should encamp against me, *
yet my heart shall not be afraid;

4 And though war should rise up against me, *
yet will I put my trust in him.

5 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;

6 To behold the fair beauty of the Lord *
and to seek him in his temple.

7 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.
8 Even now he lifts up my head *
above my enemies round about me.
9 Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an oblation
with sounds of great gladness; *
I will sing and make music to the Lord.
10 Hearken to my voice, O Lord, when I call; *
have mercy on me and answer me.
11 You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." *
Your face, Lord, will I seek.
12 Hide not your face from me, *
nor turn away your servant in displeasure.
13 You have been my helper;
cast me not away; *
do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.
14 Though my father and my mother forsake me, *
the Lord will sustain me.
15 Show me your way, O Lord; *
lead me on a level path, because of my enemies.
16 Deliver me not into the hand of my adversaries, *
for false witnesses have risen up against me,
and also those who speak malice.
17 What if I had not believed
that I should see the goodness of the Lord *
in the land of the living!
18 O tarry and await the Lord's pleasure;
be strong, and he shall comfort your heart; *
wait patiently for the Lord.

Epistle: Philippians 3:17-4:1 read from the Holman Christian Standard Bible

17 Join in imitating me, brothers, and observe those who live according to the example you

have in us. 18 For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame. They are focused on earthly things, 20 but our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subject everything to Himself.

4 So then, my brothers, you are dearly loved and longed for—my joy and crown. In this manner stand firm in the Lord, dear friends.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: Luke 13:31-35 read from the International Children's Bible

31 At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “Go away from here! Herod wants to kill you!”

32 Jesus said to them, “Go tell that fox Herod, ‘Today and tomorrow I am forcing demons out of people and finishing my work of healing. Then, on the third day, I will reach my goal.’ 33 Yet I must be on my way today and tomorrow and the next day. Surely it cannot be right for a prophet to be killed anywhere except in Jerusalem.

34 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets. You kill with stones those men that God has sent you. Many times I wanted to help your people. I wanted to gather them together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you did not let me. 35 Now your home will be left completely empty. I tell you, you will not see me again until that time when you will say, ‘God bless the One who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On March 20th we remember the life of Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Thomas Ken was born at Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, England, in July 1637. Throughout his life he was both rewarded and punished for his integrity. His close relationship with the royal

family began when he became chaplain to Princess Mary of Orange at The Hague. Ken was appalled at the Prince of Orange's treatment of his wife, and rebuked him publicly.

In 1683, Ken returned to England and became chaplain to Charles II. His integrity stirred him to rebuke Charles for lax behavior. When Ken was notified that the King's mistress, the actress Nell Gwynne, was to be lodged at his house, he refused, saying, "a woman of ill-repute ought not to be endured in the house of a clergyman, and especially the King's chaplain." The King took no offense, but in the next year made Ken the Bishop of Bath and Wells, declaring that none should have the position except "the little..fellow that refused his lodging to poor Nelly."

In 1688, when Charles' successor, James II, tried to undermine the authority of the Church of England and restore Roman Catholicism, Ken was one of seven bishops who refused to read the King's Declaration of Indulgence, which offered toleration to Protestant non-conformists and to Roman Catholics. The seven bishops were sent to the Tower, but were acquitted in the courts, and became popular heroes. After the Revolution of 1688, however, Ken's conscience did not permit him to swear allegiance to William of Orange, who became King William III. As a Non-Juror,(someone who would not swear an oath to the king) Ken was deprived of his see.

Ken's conscience would not let him rest and his disagreement with others of the "Non-Juring" party over various matters troubled him for the rest of his life. He deplored the Non-Juror schism, and after the accession of Queen Anne in 1702, he made his peace with the Church of England, encouraging his fellow Non-Jurors to return to their parish churches in 1710. Ken announced his intention to do the same, but died on March 19, 1711, before doing so.

A man of deep piety, Ken was the author of several religious works, which were immensely popular in the eighteenth century. He is best known as a writer of hymns, particularly the well-known evening hymn, "All praise to thee, my God, this night". (Found in the 1982 hymnal #43), which concludes with his doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." One of the most compelling products of his piety and his pen is the prayer, "Our God, amidst the deplorable division of your church, let us never widen its breaches, but give us universal charity to all who are called by your name. Deliver us from the sins and errors, the schisms

and heresies of the age. Give us grace daily to pray for the peace of your church, and earnestly to seek it and to excite all we can to praise and love you; through Jesus Christ, our one Savior and Redeemer.”

Let us pray: Almighty God, who gave to your servant Thomas Ken grace and courage to bear witness to the truth before rulers and kings: Give us strength also that, following his example, we may constantly defend what is right, boldly reprove what is evil, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. **Amen.**