

Fourth Sunday in Lent Sunday, March 31, 2019

The Collect: Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Joshua 5:9-12 read from the Modern English Version Bible

9 The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the disgrace of Egypt from upon you." So the name of that place is called Gilgal even to this day.

10 The children of Israel camped in Gilgal and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. 11 The day after the Passover, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened bread, and roasted grain. 12 The manna stopped the day after they ate from the produce of the land, and the children of Israel no longer had manna. That year they ate what the land of Canaan yielded.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 32 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, *
and whose sin is put away!

2 Happy are they to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, *
and in whose spirit there is no guile!

3 While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, *
because of my groaning all day long.

4 For your hand was heavy upon me day and night; *
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you, *
and did not conceal my guilt.

6 I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." *
Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

7 Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in
time of trouble; *
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.

8 You are my hiding-place;
you preserve me from trouble; *
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

9 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you
should go; *
I will guide you with my eye.

10 Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; *
who must be fitted with bit and bridle,
or else they will not stay near you."

11 Great are the tribulations of the wicked; *
but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.

12 Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord; *
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 read from the New American Standard Bible

16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 read from the New Century Version Bible

The tax collectors and sinners all came to listen to Jesus. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to complain: "Look, this man welcomes sinners and even eats with them."

3 Then Jesus told them this story

11 "A man had two sons. 12 The younger son said to his father, 'Give me my share of the property.' So the father divided the property between his two sons. 13 Then the younger son gathered up all that was his and traveled far away to another country. There he wasted his money in foolish living. 14 After he had spent everything, a time came when there was no food anywhere in the country, and the son was poor and hungry. 15 So he got a job with one of the citizens there who sent the son into the fields to feed pigs. 16 The son was so hungry that he wanted to eat the pods the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. 17 When he realized what he was doing, he thought, 'All of my father's servants have plenty of food. But I am here, almost dying with hunger. 18 I will leave and return to my father and say to him, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son, but let me be like one of your servants."' 20 So the son left and went to his father.

"While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt sorry for his son. So the father ran to him and hugged and kissed him. 21 The son said, 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his servants, 'Hurry! Bring the best clothes and put them on him. Also, put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get our fat calf and kill it so we can have a feast and celebrate. 24 My son was dead, but now he is alive again! He was lost, but now he is found!' So they began to celebrate.

25 "The older son was in the field, and as he came closer to the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. 26 So he called to one of the servants and asked what all this meant. 27 The servant said, 'Your brother has come back, and your father killed the fat calf, because your brother came home safely.' 28 The older son was angry and would not go in to

the feast. So his father went out and begged him to come in. 29 But the older son said to his father, 'I have served you like a slave for many years and have always obeyed your commands. But you never gave me even a young goat to have at a feast with my friends. 30 But your other son, who wasted all your money on prostitutes, comes home, and you kill the fat calf for him!' 31 The father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 We had to celebrate and be happy because your brother was dead, but now he is alive. He was lost, but now he is found.'"

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On April 2 we celebrate the life of James Lloyd Breck, Priest, read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

James Lloyd Breck was one of the most important missionaries of The Episcopal Church in the nineteenth century. He was called "The Apostle of the Wilderness."

Breck was born in Philadelphia in 1818, and like many important churchmen of his time, was greatly influenced by the pastoral devotion, liturgical concern, and sacramental emphasis of William Augustus Muhlenberg. Breck attended Muhlenberg's school in Flushing, New York, before entering the University of Pennsylvania. Muhlenberg inspired him, when he was sixteen years old, to dedicate himself to a missionary life. The dedication was crystallized when Beck, with three other classmates from the General Theological Seminary, founded a religious community at Nashotah, Wisconsin, which in 1844 was on the frontier.

Nashotah became a center of liturgical observance, of pastoral care, and education. Isolated families were visited, mission stations established, and, probably for the first time since the Revolution, Episcopal missionaries were the first to reach the settlers.

Though Nashotah House flourished, and became one of the seminaries of The Episcopal Church, the "religious house" ideal did not. Breck moved on to St. Paul, Minnesota, where he began the work of The Episcopal Church. At Gull Lake, he organized St. Columba's Mission for the Chippewa. It laid the foundation for work among the Native Americans by their own native priests, although the mission itself did not survive.

In 1855, Breck married and in 1858 settled in Faribault, Minnesota, where his mission was associated with one of the first cathedrals established in The Episcopal Church in the United States. He also founded Seabury Divinity School, which later merged with Western Theological Seminary, to become Seabury-Western. In 1867, Breck went on to California, inspired principally by the opportunity of founding a new theological school. His schools at Benicia, California did not survive, but the five parishes which he founded did, and the Church in California was strengthened immensely through his work. He died of exhaustion, at the age of 57, in 1876.

Let us pray: Teach thy Church, O Lord, we pray, to value and support pioneering and courageous missionaries, whom you call, as you called your servant James Lloyd Breck, to preach and teach, and plant your Church in new regions; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**