

Fifth Sunday in Lent Sunday, April 07, 2019

The Collect: Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Isaiah 43:16-21 read from the New International Version Bible

16 This is what the Lord says—

he who made a way through the sea,
a path through the mighty waters,

17 who drew out the chariots and horses,

the army and reinforcements together,
and they lay there, never to rise again,
extinguished, snuffed out like a wick:

18 “Forget the former things;

do not dwell on the past.

19 See, I am doing a new thing!

Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.

20 The wild animals honor me,

the jackals and the owls,

because I provide water in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland,

to give drink to my people, my chosen,

21 the people I formed for myself

that they may proclaim my praise.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 126 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

- 1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, *
then were we like those who dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, *
and our tongue with shouts of joy.
- 3 Then they said among the nations, *
“The Lord has done great things for them.”
- 4 The Lord has done great things for us, *
and we are glad indeed.
- 5 Restore our fortunes, O Lord, *
like the watercourses of the Negev.
- 6 Those who sowed with tears *
will reap with songs of joy.
- 7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, *
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

Epistle: Philippians 3:4b-14 read from the New Living Translation

Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more!

5 I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. **6** I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.

7 I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. **8** Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ **9** and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith. **10** I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, **11** so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection

from the dead!

12 I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. **13** No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, **14** I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: John 12:1-8 read from the New Revised Standard Version Bible

1 Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. **2** There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. **3** Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. **4** But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, **5** "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" **6** (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) **7** Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. **8** You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

The Gospel of the Lord

The Closing Prayer: On April 12 we remember Adoniram Judson, Missionary to Burma. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Adoniram Judson is remembered as the first American Missionary to devote his life and work to proclaiming the gospel in a distant land. He served as an American Baptist missionary to Burma, presently Myanmar, for nearly forty years.

Born into a devout Congregationalist family in Massachusetts, Judson demonstrated an

unusual intellectual ability from an early age. A voracious reader and excellent student, he graduated first in his class at the College of Rhode Island, now Brown University, and further studied at Andover Theological School. Early on, he was drawn toward preparing for missionary work. Judson discovered a particular gift for languages that served him well throughout his missionary endeavors.

In 1811, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions appointed Judson a missionary to the East. Early in 1812, he married his beloved Ann, and together they set sail, stopping first in India before proceeding to Burma. Upon arrival in 1813, they immersed themselves in three years of intensive study of the Burmese language.

Burma was a difficult context for mission work. It was some years before the first convert to Christianity and, by the early 1820's, only a modest handful of people – about a dozen – claimed the Christian faith. It was during this time that Judson began his monumental work of translating the Bible into Burmese and creating a Burmese grammar book that remains a standard reference work.

During the first war between Britain and Burma in the mid-1820's, Judson was imprisoned and tortured, and his wife, Ann, though not imprisoned, suffered the indignities of being a Christian woman living under a decidedly anti-Christian regime.

It was only after the war and Judson's imprisonment that the evangelical witness among the Burmese began to take hold. Judson's desire to call forth a hundred converts soon bore fruit in more than a hundred congregations and thousands of converts. On Judson's shoulders a new generation of missionaries and local pastors led unbelievers to the gospel in record numbers and Burma became a stronghold of Christian witness in the East.

Judson died on April 12, 1850, on the coast of the Bay of Bengal.

Let us pray: Eternal God, we thank you for the ministry of Adoniram Judson, who out of love for you and your people translated the Scriptures into Burmese. Move us, inspired by his example, to support the presentation of your Good News in every language, for the glory of

Jesus Christ; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.