

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, August 22

The Collect: Grant, O merciful God, that your Church, being gathered together in unity by your Holy Spirit, may show forth your power among all peoples, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Track 1 Old Testament: 1 Kings 8:(1, 6, 10-11), 22-30, 41-43 read from The International Children's Bible

1 Then King Solomon called for all the leaders of Israel to come to him in Jerusalem. He called for the elders, the heads of the tribes and the leaders of the families. He wanted them to bring the Ark of the Covenant with the Lord from the older part of the city.

6 Then the priests put the Ark of the Covenant with the Lord in its right place. This was inside the Most Holy Place in the Temple. The Ark of the Covenant was put under the wings of the golden creatures.

10 When the priests left the Holy Place, the cloud filled the Temple of the Lord. 11 The priests could not continue their work. This was because the Temple was filled with the glory of the Lord.

22 Then Solomon stood facing the Lord's altar. All of the people of Israel were standing behind him. He spread out his hands and looked toward the sky. 23 He said: "Lord, God of Israel, there is no god like you. There is no god like you in heaven above or on the earth below. You make agreements with your people because you love them. And you keep your agreements with those who truly follow you. 24 You have kept the promise you made to your servant David, my father. You made that promise with your own mouth. And with your great power you have made it come true today. 25 Now Lord, God of Israel, keep the other promises you made to your servant David, my father. You said, 'Your sons must be careful to obey me as you have obeyed me. If they do this, there will always be someone from your family ruling Israel.' 26 Again, Lord, God of Israel, I ask you. Please

continue to keep that promise you made to my father.

27 “But, God, can you really live here on the earth? Even the sky and the highest place in heaven cannot contain you. Certainly this house which I have built cannot contain you either. 28 But please listen to my prayer and my request. I am your servant, and you are the Lord my God. Hear this prayer I am praying to you today. 29 In the past you said, ‘I will be worshiped there.’ So please watch over this Temple night and day. Hear the prayer I pray to you here. 30 Hear my prayers and the prayers of your people Israel. Please hear us when we pray facing this place. Hear us from your home in heaven. And when you hear us, forgive us.

41-42 “People who are not Israelites, who come from other lands, will hear about your greatness and power. They will come from far away to pray at this Temple. 43 Please hear their prayers from your home in heaven. Please do whatever they ask you. Then people everywhere will know you and respect you, as your people in Israel do. Then everyone will know I built this Temple for worship to you.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Track 1 Psalm 84 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts! *

My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

2 The sparrow has found her a house

and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; *
by the side of your altars, O Lord of hosts,
my King and my God.

3 Happy are they who dwell in your house! *

they will always be praising you.

4 Happy are the people whose strength is in you! *

whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.

5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs, *

for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.

6 They will climb from height to height, *

and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.

7 Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; *

hearken, O God of Jacob.

8 Behold our defender, O God; *

and look upon the face of your Anointed.

9 For one day in your courts is better than a thousand in my own room, *

and to stand at the threshold of the house of my God

than to dwell in the tents of the wicked.

10 For the Lord God is both sun and shield; *

he will give grace and glory;

11 No good thing will the Lord withhold *

from those who walk with integrity.

12 O Lord of hosts, *

happy are they who put their trust in you!

Track 2 Old Testament: Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18 read from The International Children's Bible

24 Then all the tribes of Israel met together at Shechem. Joshua called them all together there. Then he called the elders, heads of families, judges and officers of Israel. These men stood before God.

2 Then Joshua spoke to all the people. He said, "Here's what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to you: 'A long time ago your ancestors lived on the other side of the Euphrates River. I am talking about men like Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor.

14 Then Joshua spoke to the people. He said, "Now you have heard the Lord's words. So you must respect the Lord and serve him fully and sincerely. Throw away the false gods that your people worshiped. That happened on the other side of the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Now you must serve the Lord. 15 But maybe you don't want to serve the Lord. You must choose for yourselves today. You must decide whom you will serve. You may serve

the gods that your people worshiped when they lived on the other side of the Euphrates River. Or you may serve the gods of the Amorites who lived in this land. As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”

16 Then the people answered, “No! We will never stop following the Lord. We will never serve other gods! 17 We know it was the Lord our God who brought our people out of Egypt. We were slaves in that land. But the Lord did great things for us there. He brought us out. He protected us while we traveled through other lands. 18 Then he helped us defeat the people living in these lands. He helped us defeat the Amorites who lived here. So we will continue to serve the Lord because he is our God.”

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Track 2 Psalm 34:15-22 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, *
and his ears are open to their cry.

16 The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, *
to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 The righteous cry, and the Lord hears them *
and delivers them from all their troubles.

18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted *
and will save those whose spirits are crushed.

19 Many are the troubles of the righteous, *
but the Lord will deliver him out of them all.

20 He will keep safe all his bones; *
not one of them shall be broken.

21 Evil shall slay the wicked, *
and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

22 The Lord ransoms the life of his servants, *
and none will be punished who trust in him.

The Epistle: Ephesians 6:10-20 read from the King James 21 Century Version Bible

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Therefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and, having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness,

15 and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.

16 Above all, take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,

18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

19 And pray for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel,

20 for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

The Gospel: John 6:56-69 read from the Lexham English Bible

56 The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood resides in me and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so also the one who eats me—that one will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not as the fathers ate and died. The one who eats this bread will live forever.”

59 He said these things while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. 60 Thus many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, “This saying is hard! Who can understand it?” 61 But Jesus, because he knew within himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to

them, “Does this cause you to be offended? 62 Then what if you see the Son of Man ascending where he was before? 63 The Spirit is the one who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) 65 And he said, “Because of this I said to you that no one can come to me unless it has been granted to him by the Father.”

66 For this reason many of his disciples drew back and were not walking with him any longer. 67 So Jesus said to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?”

68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 And we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On August 28 we celebrate the life of Moses the Black, Desert Father and Martyr. Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses

Moses of Ethiopia, sometimes called Moses the Black, was a fifth century monk who lived in one of several isolated desert monasteries near Scete in Lower Egypt. He was described as being tall, strong, “black of body,” and in his early life, the hot-blooded leader of a marauding robber band.

Little is known of his actual life, but an imaginative collection of religious legends has accumulated about him. Such tales point to the deep struggles of a Christian soul seeking salvation in difficult settings. Moses was portrayed as a person of excesses, a slave who was both a thief and a murderer, a perennial fornicator who, after he became a monk, still struggled for several years with sexual fantasies. To rid himself of sexual temptation, he reportedly stood all night in his cell with his eyes open. This struggle endured for seven years, after which the temptations went away.

He led an ascetic life, lived in a simple cell, and ate only ten ounces of dry bread each day. Once, when the monks gathered to judge a member who had sinned, Brother Moses arrived carrying a leaky basket filled with sand on his back. He explained that what he was

holding behind him represented his own many sins, now hidden from his own view. “And now I have come to judge my brother for a small fault,” he remarked. The other monks then each personally forgave their erring brother and returned to their cells.

Moses was not ordained until late in life; also in his later years, he founded his own monastery. At about age 75, he was warned that an armed band of raiders was approaching to slay him. “They who live by the sword shall die by the sword” (Matthew 26:52), the former robber-murderer calmly replied. He and six other brothers waited patiently, and were slain, after which, according to the monastic account St. Moses the Ethiopian, seven crowns descended from heaven over the place where they were martyred.

Let us pray: Almighty God, whose blessed Son guides our footsteps in the way of peace: Deliver us from paths of hatred and violence, that we, following the example of your servant Moses, may serve you with singleness of heart and attain to the tranquility of the world to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**