

Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 22

The Collect: O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

First Lesson: Acts 16:9-15 read from the Modern English Version Bible

9 During the night a vision appeared to Paul: A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

11 From Troas we set sail on a straight course to Samothrace and the next day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is the main city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony. We stayed in this city several days.

13 On the Sabbath we went out of the city to a riverside, where prayer was customarily offered. And we sat down and spoke to the women who had assembled. 14 A woman named Lydia, a seller of purple fabric of the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God, heard us. The Lord opened her heart to acknowledge what Paul said. 15 When she and her household were baptized, she entreated us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and remain there." And she persuaded us.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm:67 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

¹ May God be merciful to us and bless us, *

show us the light of his countenance and come to us.

² Let your ways be known upon earth, *
your saving health among all nations.

³ Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.

⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, *
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide all the nations upon earth.

⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.

⁶ The earth has brought forth her increase; *
may God, our own God, give us his blessing.

⁷ May God give us his blessing, *
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.

Second Lesson: Revelation 21:10, 22-27: 22:1-5 read from the New American Standard Bible

10 And he carried me away in *the* Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illuminated it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 25 In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; 26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

22 And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river *was* the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. 3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; 4 they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads. 5 And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illuminate them; and they will reign forever and ever.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: John 14:23-29 or John 5:1-9 read from the New Century Version Bible

John 14: 23 – 29

23 Jesus answered, “If people love me, they will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. 24 Those who do not love me do not obey my teaching. This teaching that you hear is not really mine; it is from my Father, who sent me.

25 “I have told you all these things while I am with you. 26 But the Helper will teach you everything and will cause you to remember all that I told you. This Helper is the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name.

27 “I leave you peace; my peace I give you. I do not give it to you as the world does. So don’t let your hearts be troubled or afraid. 28 You heard me say to you, ‘I am going, but I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you should be happy that I am going back to the Father, because he is greater than I am. 29 I have told you this now, before it happens, so that when it happens, you will believe.

The Gospel of the Lord

John 5: 1 -9

5 Later Jesus went to Jerusalem for a special feast. 2 In Jerusalem there is a pool with five covered porches, which is called Bethesda in the Hebrew language. This pool is near the Sheep Gate. 3 Many sick people were lying on the porches beside the pool. Some were blind, some were crippled, and some were paralyzed [, and they waited for the water to move. 4 Sometimes an angel of the Lord came down to the pool and stirred up the water. After the angel did this, the first person to go into the pool was healed from any sickness he had]. 5 A man was lying there who had been sick for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw the man and knew that he had been sick for such a long time, Jesus asked him, “Do you want to be well?”

7 The sick man answered, “Sir, there is no one to help me get into the pool when the water starts moving. While I am coming to the water, someone else always gets in before me.”

8 Then Jesus said, “Stand up. Pick up your mat and walk.” 9 And immediately the man was well; he picked up his mat and began to walk.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On May 28 we celebrate the life of John Calvin, Theologian. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

John Calvin was the premier theologian and leader of the Reformed wing of the Protestant Reformation.

Calvin was born in France in 1509 and reared in a devout Roman Catholic family. He excelled at his studies and, by the age of 19, he had earned a master’s degree. His father wanted him to study law, which he did for a time, but Calvin’s own passions were theology, languages, rhetoric and the literary sciences. Around 1534, he underwent a major conversion experience, left the Roman Church, and devoted the rest of his life to the evangelical cause of the Protestant Reformation.

Calvin's greatest work is *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, first published in 1536, but repeatedly updated and revised until its final edition in 1559. Unlike Luther and Zwingli, whose theological writings were "situational" in the sense of addressing particular conflicts, Calvin's *Institutes* were a more systematic treatment of the whole of Reformed evangelical theology. By taking up his reforming agenda fifteen years after Luther and Zwingli, Calvin was able to write in a more reflective and considered mode, beyond the crossfire and immediacy of the early years of the Reformation. Standard themes in Reformed theology—the sovereignty of God, election and predestination, the true nature of the Christian life, and the proper understanding of the authority of Scripture—even now bear strong Calvinist qualities. The *Institutes* continue to be an accessible window into the Reformed theology of the sixteenth century.

Calvin was also interested in theological principles controlling the civil state by imposing moral discipline on the people. His efforts in Geneva to establish such a theocratic moral code enjoyed periods of modest success but were met with resistance as well. Positively, Calvin's theocratic principles of public life led to the creation of hospitals, care for the poor, orphans, widows and the infirm, provisions for better sanitation, and the creation of new industries to employ the people. Calvin's Geneva was also a safe haven for John Knox and other Protestants of the Reformed tradition during times of unrest and exile.

Calvin died in Geneva on May 27, 1564.

Let us pray: Sovereign and holy God, you brought John Calvin from a study of legal systems to understand the godliness of your divine laws as revealed in Scripture: Fill us with a like zeal to teach and preach your Word, that the whole world may come to know your Son Jesus Christ, the true Word and Wisdom; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, ever one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**