

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, July 31

The Collect: Let your continual mercy, O Lord, cleanse and defend your Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without your help, protect and govern it always by your goodness; 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: Hosea 11:1-11 read from the New Revised Standard Version Bible

11 When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.

2 The more I called them,
the more they went from me;
they kept sacrificing to the Baals
and offering incense to idols.

3 Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk;
I took them up in my arms,
but they did not know that I healed them.

4 I led them with cords of human kindness,
with bands of love.

I was to them like those
who lift infants to their cheeks.
I bent down to them and fed them.

5 They shall return to the land of Egypt,
and Assyria shall be their king,
because they have refused to return to me.

6 The sword rages in their cities;
it consumes their oracle priests
and devours because of their schemes.

7 My people are bent on turning away from me.
To the Most High they call,

but he does not raise them up at all.

8 How can I give you up, Ephraim?

How can I hand you over, O Israel?

How can I make you like Admah?

How can I treat you like Zeboiim?

My heart recoils within me;

my compassion grows warm and tender.

9 I will not execute my fierce anger;

I will not again destroy Ephraim,

for I am God and no mortal,

the Holy One in your midst,

and I will not come in wrath.

10 They shall go after the Lord,

who roars like a lion;

when he roars,

his children shall come trembling from the west.

11 They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt

and like doves from the land of Assyria,

and I will return them to their homes, says the Lord.

Track 1 Psalm: Psalm 107:1-9, 43 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, *

and his mercy endures for ever.

2 Let all those whom the Lord has redeemed proclaim *

that he redeemed them from the hand of the foe.

3 He gathered them out of the lands; *

from the east and from the west,

from the north and from the south.

4 Some wandered in desert wastes; *

they found no way to a city where they might dwell.

5 They were hungry and thirsty; *
their spirits languished within them.

6 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, *
and he delivered them from their distress.

7 He put their feet on a straight path *
to go to a city where they might dwell.

8 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his mercy *
and the wonders he does for his children.

9 For he satisfies the thirsty *
and fills the hungry with good things.

43 Whoever is wise will ponder these things, *
and consider well the mercies of the Lord.

Track 2 Old Testament: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23 read from the New Revised Standard Version Bible

1:2 Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

12 I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 I applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to humans to be busy with. 14 I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun, and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

2:18 I hated all my toil in which I had toiled under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to my successor, 19 and who knows whether he will be wise or foolish? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. 20 So I turned and gave my heart up to despair concerning all the toil of my labors under the sun, 21 because sometimes one who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave all to be enjoyed by another who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. 22 What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun? 23 For all their days are full of pain, and their work is a vexation; even at night their minds do not rest. This

also is vanity.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Track 2 Psalm: Psalm 49:1-11 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 Hear this, all you peoples;

hearken, all you who dwell in the world, *

you of high degree and low, rich and poor together.

2 My mouth shall speak of wisdom, *

and my heart shall meditate on understanding.

3 I will incline my ear to a proverb *

and set forth my riddle upon the harp.

4 Why should I be afraid in evil days, *

when the wickedness of those at my heels surrounds me,

5 The wickedness of those who put their trust in their goods, *

and boast of their great riches?

6 We can never ransom ourselves, *

or deliver to God the price of our life;

7 For the ransom of our life is so great, *

that we should never have enough to pay it,

8 In order to live for ever and ever, *

and never see the grave.

9 For we see that the wise die also;

like the dull and stupid they perish *

and leave their wealth to those who come after them.

10 Their graves shall be their homes for ever,

their dwelling places from generation to generation, *

though they call the lands after their own names.

11 Even though honored, they cannot live for ever; *

they are like the beasts that perish.

**Epistle: Colossians 3:1-11 read from the New Revised Standard Version Bible
Anglicized**

3 So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, 3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. 7 These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. 8 But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices 10 and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. 11 In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Luke 12:13-21 read from the World English Bible

13 One of the multitude said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

14 But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” 15 He said to them, “Beware! Keep yourselves from covetousness, for a man’s life doesn’t consist of the abundance of the things which he possesses.”

16 He spoke a parable to them, saying, “The ground of a certain rich man produced abundantly. 17 He reasoned within himself, saying, ‘What will I do, because I don’t have room to store my crops?’ 18 He said, ‘This is what I will do. I will pull down my barns, build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 I will tell my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years. Take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry.”

20 “But God said to him, ‘You foolish one, tonight your soul is required of you. The things which you have prepared—whose will they be?’ 21 So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing prayer: On August 3 we celebrate the life of George Freeman Bragg, Jr.

Priest. Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses.

George Freeman Bragg served for 35 years as the secretary of the Conference for Church Workers Among the Colored People and authored important studies, such as A History of the Afro-American Group of The Episcopal Church and Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, documenting the early history of African Americans in The Episcopal Church.

Bragg was born to slaves of an Episcopal family in Warrenton, North Carolina, in 1863. As a young man he campaigned for the Readjuster Party in Virginia, which advocated for voting rights and state supported higher education for African Americans. He was the editor of the influential black weekly paper The Lancet, which he renamed the Afro-American Churchman upon his entrance into divinity school in 1885. Through this paper, Bragg called attention to the fact that African Americans were treated as recipients of mission work but were not supported in raising up self-sustaining institutions that would have fostered their presence in the Church.

Ordained a deacon in 1887 in Norfolk, Virginia, Bragg challenged the diocese’s policy of requiring black men to remain in deacon’s orders for five or more years, much longer than their white counterparts, and in 1888 he was ordained a priest. He served as the rector of St. James’ First African Church in Baltimore for 49 years, from 1891 until his death in 1940. He helped establish the Maryland Home for Friendless Colored Children, and did not cease in his advocacy for black Episcopalians and their full inclusion in the larger life of the church, vehemently challenging the exclusion of African Americans from the church’s society for mission work. He was instrumental in fostering over twenty priestly vocations in an environment in which black Episcopalians were often left to fend for themselves without the support and resources of the larger Church.

Let us pray: O God, whose mighty hand freed your servant George Freeman Bragg from bondage and blessed him with perseverance and courage: Deliver your Church from its ignorance and injustice, that, through his example and prayers, all the baptized may share in the work of ministry and, at the last, attain to the perfect freedom of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.