

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, July 09, 2017

The Collect: O God, you have taught us to keep all your commandments by loving you and our neighbor: Grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit, that we may be devoted to you with our whole heart, and united to one another with pure affection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 read from the New Living Translation Bible

"I am Abraham's servant," he explained. "And the Lord has greatly blessed my master; he has become a wealthy man. The Lord has given him flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, a fortune in silver and gold, and many male and female servants and camels and donkeys.

"When Sarah, my master's wife, was very old, she gave birth to my master's son, and my master has given him everything he owns. And my master made me take an oath. He said, 'Do not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. Go instead to my father's house, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son.'

"So today when I came to the spring, I prayed this prayer: 'O Lord, God of my master, Abraham, please give me success on this mission. See, I am standing here beside this spring. This is my request. When a young woman comes to draw water, I will say to her, 'Please give me a little drink of water from your jug.' If she says, 'Yes, have a drink, and I will draw water for your camels, too,' let her be the one you have selected to be the wife of my master's son.'

"Before I had finished praying in my heart, I saw Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water. So I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.' She quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and said, 'Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!' So I drank, and then she watered the camels.

"Then I asked, 'Whose daughter are you?' She replied, 'I am the daughter of Bethuel, and my grandparents are Nahor and Milcah.' So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists.

“Then I bowed low and worshiped the Lord. I praised the Lord, the God of my master, Abraham, because he had led me straight to my master’s niece to be his son’s wife. So tell me—will you or won’t you show unfailing love and faithfulness to my master? Please tell me yes or no, and then I’ll know what to do next.”

So they called Rebekah. “Are you willing to go with this man?” they asked her. And she replied, “Yes, I will go.”

So they said good-bye to Rebekah and sent her away with Abraham’s servant and his men. The woman who had been Rebekah’s childhood nurse went along with her. They gave her this blessing as she parted: “Our sister, may you become the mother of many millions! May your descendants be strong and conquer the cities of their enemies.”

Then Rebekah and her servant girls mounted the camels and followed the man. So Abraham’s servant took Rebekah and went on his way.

Meanwhile, Isaac, whose home was in the Negev, had returned from Beer-lahai-roi. One evening as he was walking and meditating in the fields, he looked up and saw the camels coming. When Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac, she quickly dismounted from her camel. “Who is that man walking through the fields to meet us?” she asked the servant.

And he replied, “It is my master.” So Rebekah covered her face with her veil. Then the servant told Isaac everything he had done. And Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah’s tent, and she became his wife. He loved her deeply, and she was a special comfort to him after the death of his mother.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 45:11-18 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

11 "Hear, O daughter; consider and listen closely; * forget your people and your father's house.

12 The king will have pleasure in your beauty; * he is your master; therefore do him honor.

13 The people of Tyre are here with a gift; * the rich among the people seek your favor."

14 All glorious is the princess as she enters; * her gown is cloth-of-gold.

15 In embroidered apparel she is brought to the king; * after her the bridesmaids follow in procession.

16 With joy and gladness they are brought, * and enter into the palace of the king.

17 "In place of fathers, O king, you shall have sons; * you shall make them princes over all the earth.

18 I will make your name to be remembered from one generation to another; * therefore nations will praise you for ever and ever."

Epistle: Romans 7:15-25a read from the New Revised Standard Bible

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30 read from the New Revised Standard Version Bible Anglicised

'But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another, "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn."

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon”; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!” Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.’

At that time Jesus said, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On July 12th we remember Nathan Söderblom, Archbishop & Ecumenist

Nathan Söderblom, Archbishop of Uppsala, is regarded as one of the founders of the modern ecumenical movement. Born in Sweden on January 15th, 1866, Söderblom attended the University of Uppsala and was ordained a priest in the Lutheran Church of Sweden in 1893. From 1894-1901, he served as Pastor of the Swedish Lutheran community in Paris, during which time he took his doctorate in theology at the Sorbonne. He returned to Uppsala in 1902 to teach and lead the School of Theology at the university. He was a highly respected scholar and teacher, a prolific writer, and an early proponent of the study of comparative religions.

To the surprise and dismay of many, he was appointed Archbishop of Uppsala in 1914. It had been centuries since the senior bishops of the Swedish Church had been passed over for the appointment, and this was particularly notable since Söderblom was not a bishop.

Söderblom took a great interest in the early liturgical renewal movement among Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Lutherans. This coincided with his deep commitment to the unity of the churches of Christ and his passion for ecumenical advancement. In 1925 he invited

Episcopalian/Anglican, Reformed, Lutheran, and Orthodox leaders to Stockholm, and together they formed the Universal Christian Council on Life and Work. Söderblom worked closely with Charles Henry Brent at the First Conference on Faith and Order that Brent organized in 1927 in Lausanne, Switzerland. Because of his effort and his tireless advocacy of Christian unity, Söderblom is numbered among the ecumenists whose efforts lead eventually to the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948. It was Söderblom's advocacy for church unity as a means toward world peace that earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1930.

Archbishop Söderblom saw a profound connection between liturgical worship, personal prayer, and social justice. A rich cohesion of these elements was, in his mind, the foundation of a Christian commitment well lived. He served as Archbishop of Uppsala until his death on July 12th, 1931.

Let us pray: Almighty God, we bless your Name for the life and work of Nathan Söderblom, Archbishop of Uppsala, who helped to inspire the modern liturgical revival and worked tirelessly for cooperation among Christians. Inspire us by his example, that we may ever strive for the renewal of your Church in life and worship, for the glory of your Name; who with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**