

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost, October 8

The Collect: Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Exodus 20: 1-4, 7-9, 12 – 20 read from the Lexham English Bible

And God spoke all these words, saying, “I am Yahweh, your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt, from the house of slaves. “There shall be for you no other gods before me. “You shall not make for yourself a divine image with any form that is in the heavens above or that is in the earth below or that is in the water below the earth.

“You shall not misuse the name of Yahweh your God, because Yahweh will not leave unpunished anyone who misuses his name.

“Remember the day of the Sabbath, to consecrate it. Six days you will work, and you will do all your work.

“Honor your father and your mother, so that your days can be long on the land that Yahweh your God is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not testify against your neighbor with a false witness.

“You shall not covet the house of your neighbor; you will not covet the wife of your neighbor or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

And all the people were seeing the thunder and the lightning and the sound of the ram’s horn and the mountain smoking, and the people saw, and they trembled, and they stood at a distance. And they said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will listen, but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you so that his fear will be before you so that you do not sin.”

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 19 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 The heavens declare the glory of God, * and the firmament shows his handiwork.

2 One day tells its tale to another, * and one night imparts knowledge to another.

3 Although they have no words or language, * and their voices are not heard,

4 Their sound has gone out into all lands, * and their message to the ends of the world.

5 In the deep has he set a pavilion for the sun; * it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber; it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

6 It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it again; * nothing is hidden from its burning heat.

7 The law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul; * the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the innocent.

8 The statutes of the Lord are just and rejoice the heart; * the commandment of the Lord is clear and gives light to the eyes.

9 The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever; * the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, * sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.

11 By them also is your servant enlightened, * and in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can tell how often he offends? * cleanse me from my secret faults.

13 Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me; * then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, * O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

The Epistle: Philippians 3: 4b – 14 read from The Message Bible

Even though we can list what many might think are impressive credentials. You know my pedigree: a legitimate birth, circumcised on the eighth day; an Israelite from the elite tribe of Benjamin; a strict and devout adherent to God's law; a fiery defender of the purity of my religion, even to the point of persecuting the church; a meticulous observer of everything set down in God's law Book.

The very credentials these people are waving around as something special, I'm tearing up and throwing out with the trash—along with everything else I used to take credit for. And why? Because of Christ. Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant—dog dung. I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by him. I didn't want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ—God's righteousness.

I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself. If there was any way to get in on the resurrection from the dead, I wanted to do it.

I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.

The Word of the Lord

The Gospel: Matthew 21: 33-46 read from the Modern English Version Bible

“Listen to another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and built a wall around it. He dug a wine press in it and built a tower. Then he rented it to vine dressers and went into a distant country. When the season of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the vine dressers to receive his fruit.

“The vine dressers took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did likewise to them. Last of all, he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

“But when the vine dressers saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ So they caught him, threw him out of the vineyard, and

killed him.

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine dressers?”

They said, “He will severely destroy those wicked men and rent his vineyard to other vine dressers who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

“Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing its fruits. Whoever falls on this stone will be broken to pieces. But on whomever it falls, it will crush him.”

When the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. But as they tried to arrest Him, they feared the crowds, because they held Him as a prophet.

The Gospel of the Lord

The Closing Prayer: On October 9th we remember Wilfred Grenfell, medical Missionary

Wilfred Thomason Grenfell was born in Cheshire, England in 1865, the second of four sons of the Reverend Sidney Grenfell, headmaster of Mostyn House School, Parkgate and his wife Jane Georgina Hutchinson. While studying medicine at the London Hospital Medical School, he came under the influence of the American revivalist Dwight L. Moody. An athlete skilled in boxing, cricket, rugby, and rowing, he was an early exponent of the “muscular Christianity” made famous by Charles Kingsley.

In 1887, as a qualified doctor, he joined the Royal National Mission to Deep-Sea Fisherman as a medical missionary, serving in Iceland and the Bay of Biscay. During a visit to Labrador in 1892, Grenfell was appalled by the near-starvation, poverty, and ill health of the British

workers there. Devoting himself to their nurture and improvement, he built the first hospital of the Labrador Medical Mission in 1893, eventually opening boarding schools, hospital ships, clothing distribution centers, and the Seaman's Institute at St. John's, Newfoundland, often with money he raised himself with speaking tours and books. Many benefactors from New York and New England enabled his relief efforts. Several of Grenfell's books about Labrador and his religious writings appealed to those with whom he worked due to his modest and simple style.

In 1912, he organized the International Grenfell Association, with branches in the United States, Newfoundland, and other parts of Canada, and this organization supported his work and ministry for the remainder of his career. The Grenfell Association continues as a charitable foundation funding grants for education and health related issues through out Newfoundland and coastal Labrador. He was knighted for his work in 1927.

Sir William retired from his work in 1935, due to ill health. He died in Vermont in October of 1940.

Let us Pray: Compassionate God, whose Son Jesus Christ taught that by ministering to the least of our brothers and sisters, we minister to him: Make us ever ready to respond to the needs of others, that, inspired by the ministry of Wilfred Grenfell to the sick and to seafarers in Labrador and northern Newfoundland, our actions may witness to the love of our Savior Jesus Christ; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.