

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany Sunday, February 04, 2018

The Collect: Set us free, O God, from the bondage of our sins, and give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Isaiah 40:21-31 read from the Revised Standard Version Bible

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; who brings princes to nought, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hid from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God"?

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary, his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 147:1-12, 21c read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises to our God! * how pleasant it is to honor him with praise!

2 The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem; * he gathers the exiles of Israel.

3 He heals the brokenhearted * and binds up their wounds.

4 He counts the number of the stars * and calls them all by their names.

5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; * there is no limit to his wisdom.

6 The Lord lifts up the lowly, * but casts the wicked to the ground.

7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; * make music to our God upon the harp.

8 He covers the heavens with clouds * and prepares rain for the earth;

9 He makes grass to grow upon the mountains * and green plants to serve mankind.

10 He provides food for flocks and herds * and for the young ravens when they cry.

11 He is not impressed by the might of a horse; * he has no pleasure in the strength of a man;

12 But the Lord has pleasure in those who fear him, * in those who await his gracious favor.

21 Hallelujah!

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 read from God's Word Bible

If I spread the Good News, I have nothing to brag about because I have an obligation to do this. How horrible it will be for me if I don't spread the Good News! If I spread the Good News willingly, I'll have a reward. But if I spread the Good News unwillingly, I'm only doing what I've been entrusted to do.

So what is my reward? It is to spread the Good News free of charge. In that way I won't use the rights that belong to those who spread the Good News.

Although I'm free from all people, I have made myself a slave for all people to win more of them. I became Jewish for Jewish people. I became subject to the laws in Moses' Teachings for those who are subject to those laws. I did this to win them even though I'm not subject to Moses' Teachings. I became like a person who does not have Moses' Teachings for those who don't have those teachings. I did this to win them even though I have God's teachings. I'm really subject to Christ's teachings. I became like a person weak in faith to win those who

are weak in faith. I have become everything to everyone in order to save at least some of them. I do all this for the sake of the Good News in order to share what it offers.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: Mark 1:29-39 read from the Holman Christian Standard Bible

As soon as they left the synagogue, they went into Simon and Andrew's house with James and John. Simon's mother-in-law was lying in bed with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. So He went to her, took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her, and she began to serve them.

When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all those who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. The whole town was assembled at the door, and He healed many who were sick with various diseases and drove out many demons. But He would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He got up, went out, and made His way to a deserted place. And He was praying there. Simon and his companions went searching for Him. They found Him and said, "Everyone's looking for You!"

And He said to them, "Let's go on to the neighboring villages so that I may preach there too. This is why I have come." So He went into all of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On February 7th we remember Cornelius the Centurion, read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

All that we know of Cornelius is contained in the Book of Acts chapters 10 and 11. He was the first Gentile converted to the Christian faith, along with his household. A centurion was commander of a company of one hundred men in the Roman army, responsible for their discipline, both on the field of battle and in camp. A centurion was a Roman citizen, a military

career man, well-paid, and generally noted for courage and competence. Some centurions, such as Cornelius, and those whom we know about from the gospel narratives were men of deep religious piety.

The author of Acts considered Cornelius' conversion very momentous for the future of Christianity. He records that it occurred as the result of divine intervention and revelation, and as a response to the preaching of Peter, the chief apostle. The experience of Cornelius' household was regarded as comparable to a new Pentecost, and it was a primary precedent for the momentous decision of the apostolic council, held in Jerusalem a few years later, to admit Gentiles to full and equal partnership with Jewish converts in the household of faith.

According to tradition, Cornelius was the second Bishop of Ceasarea, the metropolitan see of Palestine. Undoubtedly, Cornelius and his household formed the nucleus of the first church in this important city, a church that was gathered by Philip the Evangelist.

Let us pray: O God, who by your Spirit called Cornelius the Centurion to be the first Christian among the Gentiles: Grant to your Church such a ready will to go where you send and to do what you command, that under your guidance it may welcome all who turn to you in love and faith, and proclaim the Gospel to all nations; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**