

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, July 29, 2018 Tract 1

The Collect: O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: 2 Samuel 11:1-15 read from the New Century Version Bible

In the spring, when the kings normally went out to war, David sent out Joab, his servants, and all the Israelites. They destroyed the Ammonites and attacked the city of Rabbah. But David stayed in Jerusalem. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of his palace. While he was on the roof, he saw a woman bathing. She was very beautiful. So David sent his servants to find out who she was. A servant answered, "That woman is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam. She is the wife of Uriah the Hittite." So David sent messengers to bring Bathsheba to him. When she came to him, he had sexual relations with her. (Now Bathsheba had purified herself from her monthly period.) Then she went back to her house. But Bathsheba became pregnant and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

So David sent a message to Joab: "Send Uriah the Hittite to me." And Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were, and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, "Go home and rest."

So Uriah left the palace, and the king sent a gift to him. But Uriah did not go home. Instead, he slept outside the door of the palace as all the king's officers did.

The officers told David, "Uriah did not go home."

Then David said to Uriah, "You came from a long trip. Why didn't you go home?"

Uriah said to him, "The Ark and the soldiers of Israel and Judah are staying in tents. My

master Joab and his officers are camping out in the fields. It isn't right for me to go home to eat and drink and have sexual relations with my wife!"

David said to Uriah, "Stay here today. Tomorrow I'll send you back to the battle." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. Then David called Uriah to come to see him, so Uriah ate and drank with David. David made Uriah drunk, but he still did not go home. That evening Uriah again slept with the king's officers.

The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by Uriah. In the letter David wrote, "Put Uriah on the front lines where the fighting is worst and leave him there alone. Let him be killed in battle."

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 14 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." * All are corrupt and commit abominable acts; there is none who does any good.

2 The Lord looks down from heaven upon us all, * to see if there is any who is wise, if there is one who seeks after God.

3 Every one has proved faithless; all alike have turned bad; * there is none who does good; no, not one.

4 Have they no knowledge, all those evildoers * who eat up my people like bread and do not call upon the Lord?

5 See how they tremble with fear, * because God is in the company of the righteous.

6 Their aim is to confound the plans of the afflicted, * but the Lord is their refuge.

7 Oh, that Israel's deliverance would come out of Zion! * when the Lord restores the fortunes of his people, Jacob will rejoice and Israel be glad.

Epistle: Ephesians 3:14-21 read from the New International Version Bible

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power

through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: John 6:1-21 read from the New Living Translation Bible

After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do.

Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money to feed them!"

Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?"

"Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted." So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!" When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself.

That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him. But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn't come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough. They had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, but he called out to them, "Don't be afraid. I am here!" Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!

The Gospel of the Lord

The Closing Prayer: On August 3rd, we remember 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 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.**