



Daily Prayer
+ Thursday, June 11, 2020 +

Invocation

L: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Psalmody

Psalm 118:19-25

L: Open to me the gates of righteousness,

C: that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.

L: This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.

C: I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

L: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

C: This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

L: This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

C: Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success!

C: Glory be to Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Hymn

#523, v. 1-2

[1] O Word of God incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky:
We praise You for the radiance
That from the hallowed page,

A lantern to our footsteps,
Shines on from age to age.

[2] The Church from You, dear Master,
Received the gift divine;
And still that light is lifted
O'er all the earth to shine.
It is the chart and compass
That, all life's voyage through,
Mid mists and rocks and quicksands
Still guides, O Christ, to You.

Reading

Acts 11:19-30

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to

Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

L: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Devotional Message from Pastor Thompson

Our reading today from Acts 11 begins the account of the great church of Antioch. Known at the "*cradle of Christianity*", Antioch of Syria played an important role in the early mission work of the church, serving as the first Greek city to come to the faith and as the home congregation of the Apostle Paul.

Antioch was an ancient Greek city of western Syria, located near the Mediterranean Sea. Antioch was founded in the 4th century B.C. by one of Alexander the Great's generals. Located along the Silk Road between Europe and Asia, Antioch was an important commercial and military location and was populated by about 250,000 people.

The first Christian missionaries in Antioch arrived from Jerusalem because of the persecution that arose following the martyrdom of Stephen. This reminds us again of the silver lining that was involved in the first persecution of the church: through suffering the early disciples were

scattered out from Jerusalem and brought with them the Gospel to new cities and regions.

These early disciples from Jerusalem began their mission work by preaching the Gospel among the Jews in the synagogues. Some men, however, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, came to Antioch and began sharing the Gospel with the Greeks of the city as well.

This missionary work among the Greeks bore great fruit. As Luke writes, "*The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.*" (Acts 11:21) Outreach among the Greeks was a great success in Antioch and the city became the foundation stone of the mission to the Gentiles and the home base for future missionary trips throughout the Greek world.

The success of the mission work among the Greeks was not without controversy, however. As was common in those days, the question of the role of Greeks in the kingdom of God had not been fully understood. Some of the Jewish Christians remained skeptical toward the Gentile believers and were unsure exactly how the Gentiles were to be incorporated into the church.

And so we read that a report concerning the Greek mission in Antioch had come to Jerusalem and the church there sent Barnabas to investigate. Barnabas traveled to Antioch and was encouraged by the grace of God which he found among the Greek congregation in Antioch. Barnabas had previously served as a bridge and peacemaker between Paul and the apostles when they first met Paul following

his conversion. For a second time, then, Barnabas served to bring peace to the church. He supported the mission to the Greeks and brought a positive report back to Jerusalem. Barnabas earned his nickname: "*son of encouragement*".

One other significant event took place in our reading today. Barnabas realized that the church in Antioch would need help to grow and remembered that Paul had been called to preach among the Gentiles. Because of this, Barnabas went to Tarsus and found Paul and brought him back to Antioch where Paul would stay for a whole year teaching the church there.

With Paul as pastor and evangelist, the church in Antioch grew among the Greeks and they were given a new name by the people of the city: Christians. This word means "*of the household of Christ*" or "*followers of Christ*". It's a name given to the church by outsiders, who apparently were able to understand from the witness of the early Christians what made them unique: they belonged to Christ. This is a name that we continue to use today and which identifies us for who we are: children of God and members of the household of Christ.

Our reading, then, is an encouragement to identify as Christians in the world and to continue the mission work of the early church, "*speaking the word*" and "*preaching the Lord Jesus*". And may the hand of the Lord be with us. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

C: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

C: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Collect

L: Almighty God, send your Holy Spirit into our hearts that he may rule and direct us according to your will, comfort us in all our temptations and afflictions, defend us from all error, and lead us into all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing

L: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L: The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C: Amen.

Hymn

#523, v. 3

[3] Oh, make Your Church, dear Savior,
A lamp of burnished gold
To bear before the nations
Your true light, as of old!
Oh, teach Your wand'ring pilgrims
By this their path to trace
Till, clouds and darkness ended,
They see You face to face!