

7 Easter Year C



The Collect: O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

Acts 16:16-34: With Paul and Silas, we came to Philippi in Macedonia, a Roman colony, and, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe." The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

Psalm 97: 1 The LORD is King; let the earth rejoice; *let the multitude of the isles be glad. 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him, *righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne. 3 A fire goes before him *and burns up his enemies on every side. 4 His lightnings light up the world; *the earth sees it and is afraid. 5 The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD, *at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. 6 The heavens declare his righteousness, *and all the peoples see his glory. 7 Confounded be all who worship carved images and delight in false gods! *Bow down before him, all you gods. 8 Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, *because of your judgments, O LORD. 9 For you are the LORD, most high over all the earth; *you are exalted far above all gods. 10 The LORD loves those who hate evil; *he preserves the lives of his saints and delivers them from the hand of the wicked. 11 Light has sprung up for the righteous, *and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted. 12 Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, *and give thanks to his holy Name.

Revelation 22:12-14,16-17,20-21: At the end of the visions I, John, heard these words:

"See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. "It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come."

And let everyone who hears say, "Come. "And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift. The one who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon. "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.

The Gospel John 17:20-2 : Jesus prayed for his disciples, and then he said. "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

"Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

HYMNS

Opening: H-100. Joy to the World

Gradual: L-118 Spirit Song

Offertory: H-450 All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

Communion: Taize 41 Veni Sancte Spiritus

Closing: L-10 Oh, What a Beautiful City

SERMON:

- Richard Rohr: Holy or whole individuals, the ones we call "saints," are precisely the ones who have no "I" to protect or project. Their "I" is in conscious union with the "I AM" of God, and that is more than enough. Divine union overrides any need for self-hatred or self-adoration. Love holds us tightly and safely and always. Such people have met the enemy and know that the major enemy is "me" (to borrow from the comic strip character Pogo). But they do not hate the "me" either; they just see through and beyond the little "me."
- *"let everyone who hears say, "Come. "And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift."* A gift is something given, given freely, not earned, not brownie points, not owed to us.
- And note that this commandment from Jesus is inclusive, it says everyone, regardless of race, status, country of origin, *"so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."*
- It's not only inclusive, it is infolding, an important distinction to point out.
- The infolding cannot be a clique, an in-group, a cult with worship of a leader, or leaders. That is dangerous. The leader is God, not a person.
- 'Glawspel' is a new word for me. It is the mixing of Law and Gospel, a false teaching where somebody says if you obey them about what they say is the Law, then you will get the reward promised in the Gospel.
- Earthquake zone...geologists have found and recorded lists of them in Israel and the surrounding region from as far back as 1500 years BCE, including one that could have happened the day of Christ's crucifixion, so the one that happened when Paul and Silas were imprisoned was not at all uncommon.
- Maranatha...two Aramaic words that mean, Come, Lord, or The Lord Comes, or the Lord is coming, the last words in the Book of Revelation. Notice the verb options...invitation, encounter close enough to be seeing, or promise...This is our call to be whole, to be holy, to live the life of a saint...Amen? Amen.