

# HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT IS SAYING

In Scripture and Prayer and The Great Cloud of Witnesses

Week of July 3, 2022

*Collect for Proper 9*

O God, you have taught us to keep all your commandments by loving you and our neighbor: Grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit, that we may be devoted to you with our whole heart, and united to one another with pure affection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen BCP 230-231

## **Isaiah 66:10-14** NRSVue, 2021

<sup>10</sup> Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her— <sup>11</sup> that you may nurse and be satisfied from her consoling breast, that you may drink deeply with delight from her glorious bosom. <sup>12</sup> For thus says the Lord: I will extend prosperity to her like a river and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream, and you shall nurse and be carried on her arm and bounced on her knees. <sup>13</sup> As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

<sup>14</sup> You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your bodies [*Heb. bones*] shall flourish like the grass, and it shall be known that the power of the Lord is with his servants, and his indignation is against his enemies.

## **Galatians 6:(1-6), 7-16** NRSVue, 2021

<sup>1</sup> *My brothers and sisters, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted.* <sup>2</sup> *Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill* [Other ancient authorities read *in this way fulfill*] *the law of Christ.* <sup>3</sup> *For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves.* <sup>4</sup> *All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride.* <sup>5</sup> *For all must carry their own loads.*

<sup>6</sup> *Those who are taught the word must share in all good things with their teacher.*

<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. <sup>8</sup> If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh, but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. <sup>9</sup> So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. <sup>10</sup> So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all and especially for those of the family of faith.

<sup>11</sup> See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand! <sup>12</sup> It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who try to compel you to be circumcised—only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. <sup>13</sup> Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh. <sup>14</sup> May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which [Or *through whom*] the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. <sup>15</sup> For [Other ancient authorities add *in Christ Jesus*] neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation is everything! <sup>16</sup> As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

## Luke 10:1-11, 16-20 NRSVue, 2021

<sup>1</sup> After this the Lord appointed seventy-two [Other ancient authorities read *seventy*] others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. <sup>2</sup> He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. <sup>3</sup> Go on your way; I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. <sup>4</sup> Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. <sup>5</sup> Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ <sup>6</sup> And if a person of peace is there, your peace will rest on that person, but if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup> Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. <sup>8</sup> Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; <sup>9</sup> cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ [Or *is at hand for you*] <sup>10</sup> But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup> ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’ [Or *is at hand*]

<sup>12</sup> *I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.* <sup>13</sup> *“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.* <sup>14</sup> *Indeed, at the judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you.* <sup>15</sup> *And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades.*

<sup>16</sup> “Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”

<sup>17</sup> The seventy-two [Other ancient authorities read *seventy*] returned with joy, saying, “Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!”

<sup>18</sup> He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. <sup>19</sup> Indeed, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will hurt you. <sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

## **Psalm 66:1-8** NRSVue, 2021

- 1 Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;
- 2 sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise.
- 3 Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds!  
Because of your great power, your enemies cringe before you.
- 4 All the earth worships you; they sing praises to you,  
sing praises to your name.” Selah
- 5 Come and see what God has done:  
he is awesome in his deeds among mortals.
- 6 He turned the sea into dry land;  
they passed through the river on foot.  
There we rejoiced in him,
- 7 who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the  
nations— let the rebellious not exalt themselves. Selah
- 8 Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard,
- 9 who has kept us among the living and has not let our feet slip.

## Supplemental Resources

### **Commentary on Galatians 6:(1-6), 7-16**

*By Dr. Crystal L. Hall, The Kraft Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies at United Lutheran Seminary and a certified coach for women in ministry.*

In this text readers are eavesdropping on an ongoing conversation between Paul and the Jesus communities in Galatia. History has only preserved half the conversation—Paul’s words—but not what the Galatians may have written back.

This passage is a bit like listening to someone having a phone conversation. You can intuit what the person on the other end is saying based on what you can hear from the person on your side of the phone. But it’s impossible to know the actual content of what the other person is saying.

On this side of the “phone” readers are privy to, the conversation is drawing to a close. Paul is giving his regards before he “hangs up”.

This passage functions within the parenetic section of the letter (chapters

## 4

5-6). It's the "so what" or "why does what I've just said matter and what do I now call you to do about it" section. This section wraps up the letter after Paul shares his own story (chapters 1-2). It follows the part in which Paul provides evidence from the Hebrew Scriptures for how all other nations can be included alongside the Judeans in the promises of God. He describes how these nations too are brought into right relationship with the God of Israel (chapters 3-4).

While it is easy, from a Protestant perspective, to focus on what later became the theological doctrine of justification in a letter like Galatians, this text is equally concerned with ethics as evidenced by this "so what does all this really mean for our daily lives" section. In this letter being brought into right relationship with God by grace through faith in Jesus the Anointed One does not exist in abstraction from the works animated by that faith.

Faith and works function throughout Galatians as a kind of dialectic, an inseparable pair of opposites no different than how breathing in follows breathing out. That's why Paul exhorts the Galatians to bear one another's burdens and fulfill the law of Christ (6:2), why simultaneously each person must bear their own load (6:5), and why Paul emphasizes that a person will reap what they sow (6:7). He exhorts the Galatians to not lose heart in doing good, to not grow weary in the assurance that they will reap what they've planted (6:9).

These words about what the Galatians are to do in response to their faith in this third and final section of the letter include a postscript, which begins about halfway through this passage.

In 6:11 Paul takes the parchment from the scribe and writes his own P.S. (Letters in antiquity were typically dictated to a professional scribe.) He calls attention to the authenticity of this postscript by writing, "I am writing to you with my own hand." These words are his last opportunity to drive home his point before the letter is handed over to a courier, likely another Jesus follower. Paul has a last chance here to make these words really count.

What Paul writes in his own hand in this postscript harkens back to the central controversy that prompted the writing of the letter in the first place. A little backstory is needed here for context.

Paul founded the churches in Galatia. He spent time among them as the Galatians nursed him back to health while he recovered from an injury. Paul preached among them that both Jews and Gentiles, Jews and all other nations conquered by Rome, are justified or brought into right relationship with the God of Israel, through faith in Jesus the Anointed One. Paul then leaves them to continue his calling to preach the gospel to the nations elsewhere.

After Paul leaves, other teachers arrive among the churches in Galatia preaching a different gospel, which Paul derides as not even a gospel. These other teachers tell the Galatians that to be in right relationship with God they must be circumcised. They are those “who desire to make a good showing in the flesh [who] try to compel you to be circumcised” (6:12, NASB). Paul calls these teachers hypocrites who don’t even keep the law themselves but want to boast in the Galatians being circumcised (6:13).

Paul learns what these other teachers are preaching, thinks they are absolutely wrong, and fires off this letter to the churches in Galatia to explain why. He argues through the letter that it’s not “works of the law” like circumcision that bring the believer into right relationship with God. Paul says, on the contrary, come as you are. The only thing needed to be in right relationship with God is faith in Jesus the Anointed. This passing reference to “neither circumcision nor uncircumcision” is shorthand for this conflict that inspired the writing of the letter.

Paul argues that the reason neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matter, is because what really counts is the “new creation” (6:15) The history of interpretation has typically read “new creation” as the individual believer, that through faith in Jesus a person becomes new.

While this individualistic reading is certainly possible, Paul’s primary concern throughout this letter is not so much for the individual but for how groups of people can be in right and just relationship with one another within the church.

Beyond that, the new creation stands in this passage in opposition to the cosmos when Paul writes that he has been crucified to the cosmos, and the cosmos to him (6:14). Not only are communal relationships in view, but that of the entire created order.

Paul traces here the movement from life in God’s Creation, to death through Jesus’ crucifixion and the call of believers into this cruciform life, to a new creation. In this new creation, the old ways of relating, that one must become something else to belong, that one must exclude others from table fellowship, fall away. What remains instead in the new creation is a new call into right relationship with the other, a call that extends not only to one’s fellow human beings but beyond to God’s Creation itself.

Working Preacher, June 26, 2010, <https://bit.ly/Learn163> accessed June 6, 2022

## Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Charles Wesley, 1707–1788

*This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. (1 John 4:9)*

We must never underestimate the power of love in our human relationships—whether marriages, family, business associations, or friendships. The divine love of God for man far excels all other forms of love.

“Love Divine ...” is another of the more than 6500 hymns by Charles Wesley, the “sweet bard of Methodism.” This fine text—written in 1747—touches various elements of Christian doctrine. It extols the love of God as expressed in the incarnation of Christ. Then it refers to the Wesleyan concept of entire sanctification—that any believer might live without consciously sinning and thereby find the promised “rest” mentioned in Hebrews 4:9. The “Alpha and Omega” of verse two (first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) also reflect this Wesleyan teaching, that the experiences of conversion and sanctification are thought of as the “beginning of faith” and the “end or object of faith.” The third stanza emphasizes the truth that the Spirit of God indwells the temple or body of each believer, while the fourth stanza anticipates the glorious culmination of our faith when “we cast our crowns before Thee, lost in wonder, love and praise.”

Although Christians may have differences of interpretation regarding the doctrine of sanctification, we can agree on this basic truth: It ought to be a normal desire for each believer to grow in the grace of our Lord.

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heav’n, to earth come down; fix in us Thy humble dwelling; all Thy faithful mercies crown. Jesus, Thou art all compassion; pure, unbounded love Thou art; visit us with Thy salvation; enter ev’ry trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit into ev’ry troubled breast! Let us all in Thee inherit; let us find that second rest. Take away our bent to sinning, Alpha and Omega be; end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, almighty to deliver, let us all Thy life receive; suddenly return, and never, nevermore Thy temples leave. Thee we would be always blessing, serve Thee as Thy hosts above, pray and praise Thee without ceasing, glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then Thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be; let us see Thy great salvation perfectly restored in Thee. Changed from glory into glory, till in heav’n we take our place, till we cast our crowns before Thee, lost in wonder, love and praise.

Kenneth W. Osbeck, *Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 45.

# Spiritual Day Hike

In the landscape where Spirit & World intersect



Week of July 3, 2022

## This Week's Holy Women and Men (Witnesses to inspire us)

*Commemorations in the Episcopal Church are listed in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP), in Lesser Feasts and Fasts (LFF), and in a Great Cloud of Witnesses (GCoW).*

*Here are the Holy Women and Men remembered this week:*

Jul 04.....Independence Day (United States) *LFF*

Jul 06.....[Eva Lee Matthews](#), Monastic, 1928 *LFF*

Jul 06.....[John \(Jan\) Hus](#) Prophetic Witness and Martyr, 1415 *GCoW*

Jul 08.....[Priscilla and Aquila](#), Coworkers of the Apostle Paul *LFF*

## July 4: Independence Day

Proper Psalms, Lessons, and Prayers were first appointed for this national observance in the Proposed Prayer Book of 1786. They were deleted, however, by the General Convention of 1789, primarily as a result of the intervention of Bishop William White. Though himself a supporter of the American Revolution, he felt that the required observance was inappropriate, since the majority of the Church's clergy had, in fact, been loyal to the British crown.

Writing about the Convention which had called for the observance of the day throughout "this Church, on the fourth of July, for ever," White said, "The members of the convention seem to have thought themselves so established in their station of ecclesiastical legislators, that they might expect of the many clergy who had been averse to the American revolution the adoption of this service; although, by the use of it, they must make an implied acknowledgment of their error, in an address to Almighty God... The greater stress is laid on this matter because of the notorious fact, that the majority of the clergy could not have used the service, without subjecting themselves to ridicule and censure. For the author's part, having no hindrance of this sort, he contented himself with having opposed the measure, and kept the day from respect to the requisition of the convention; but could never hear of its being kept, in above two or three places beside Philadelphia."

It was not until the revision of 1928 that provision was again made for the liturgical observance of the day.

*Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2018*

## Readings appointed for Independence Day

[Deuteronomy 10:17-21](#) | [Psalm 145](#) | [Hebrews 11:8-16](#) | [Matthew 5:43-48](#)

## Day Hike -2

### *Collect for Independence Day*

Lord God Almighty, in whose Name the founders of this country won liberty for themselves and for us, and lit the torch of freedom for nations then unborn: Grant that we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain our liberties in righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. *BCP 242*

### *Collect for the Nation*

Lord God Almighty, you have made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and in peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. *BCP 258*

## July 6: Eva Lee Matthews, Monastic, 1928

Eva Lee Matthews was born on February 9, 1862, in Glendale, Ohio. She grew up as an active member of the Episcopal Church, and felt a call to service in the church from a young age. While working at Bethany Mission House, an Episcopal charitable organization designed to help the less fortunate residents of Cincinnati, she and her coworker Beatrice Henderson discerned a call to create a new Episcopal religious order. The purpose of this order was to assist Cincinnati's poor, especially children. Eva became the community's first superior, taking the name Mother Eva Mary.

On August 6, 1898, Episcopal Church officials formally recognized Matthews' and Henderson's order, formally naming the group the Community of the Transfiguration. The Community of the Transfiguration remained in Cincinnati for only a short time. The order soon relocated to Glendale, Matthews's childhood home. The order grew slowly but by the 1920s, the Community of the Transfiguration had members engaged in charity work in China, Hawaii, Painesville, Ohio, Cleveland, Ohio, and Woodlawn, Ohio.

Matthews served as the leader of the Community of the Transfiguration until her death in July 1928. The community she founded continues to serve the church in a variety of ministries in Ohio, California, and the Dominican Republic.

*Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2018*

Online: [Community of the Transfiguration](#)

## **July 6: John (Jan) Hus, Prophetic Witness and Martyr, 1415**

John Hus was born at Husinec in Bohemia c. 1369. He was a priest who, influenced by the writings of John Wyclif, became leader of the Bohemian reform movement, which called for a return to Scripture and living out of the word of God in one's life. As preacher at Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, he talked to the people in their native language. Hundreds gathered every day to hear his call for personal and institutional reform.

Clerics he had offended had him exiled from Prague, but he continued his ministry through the written word. Hus took the radical step of appealing directly to Christ rather than to the hierarchy for the justification of his stance.

When the Council of Constance opened in 1414, Hus traveled there, hoping to clear his name of charges of heresy. Hus had been given a pledge of safe conduct from the Emperor, but his enemies persuaded council officials to imprison him on the grounds that “promises made to heretics need not be kept.” Although several leaders of the Council of Constance were in favor of moderate church reform, the council's prime objective was the resolution of the Great Western Schism, which had produced three rival popes at the same time. The council therefore tried to secure a speedy recantation and submission from Hus. He maintained that the charges against him were false or twisted versions of his teachings, and he could not recant opinions he had never held. Faced with an ultimatum to recant or die, Hus chose the latter. As he approached the stake on July 6, 1415, he refused a last attempt to get him to recant and said: “The principal intention of my preaching and of all my other acts or writings was solely that I might turn men from sin. And in that truth of the gospel that I wrote, taught, and preached in accordance with the sayings and expositions of the holy doctors, I am willing gladly to die today.”

His death did not end the movement, and the Bohemian reformation continued. Hus influenced Martin Luther's reforming ideas. The Moravian Church traces its origins to Hus. Hus' rousing assertion “Truth will conquer!” is the motto of the Czech Republic today.

*A Great Cloud of Witnesses, 2018*

## **July 8: Priscilla and Aquila, Coworkers of the Apostle Paul**

When Paul came to Corinth (probably in the year 50), he met Priscilla and her husband Aquila. Like Paul, they were tentmakers by trade, and had just arrived from Rome, from which the Emperor Claudius had recently expelled the Jewish community. It is not clear whether Aquila and Priscilla were already Christians before meeting Paul, or were converted

## **Day Hike –4**

by his preaching. After eighteen months, the three of them went together to Ephesus, where Priscilla and Aquila remained while Paul continued to Antioch.

Soon after, a man named Apollos came to Ephesus, who had heard and believed a portion of the Christian message, and was promoting that belief with eloquent preaching, based on a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. Aquila and Priscilla befriended him and explained the Gospel to him more fully, after which he continued to preach with even greater effectiveness.

Priscilla and Aquila were apparently in Rome when Paul wrote to that congregation, and in Ephesus with Timothy when Paul wrote his last letter to Timothy. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus, he joined their greetings with his own. Clearly they were dear to Paul, and were earnest and effective in spreading the Good News of Christ and His saving work.

Altogether, Aquila and Priscilla are mentioned six times in the New Testament (Acts 18:2, Acts 18:18-19, Acts 18:26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19), and the observant reader may note that in half of these Aquila's name comes first, while in the other half, Priscilla's comes first, as if to emphasize that they are being mentioned on equal terms.

*Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2018*