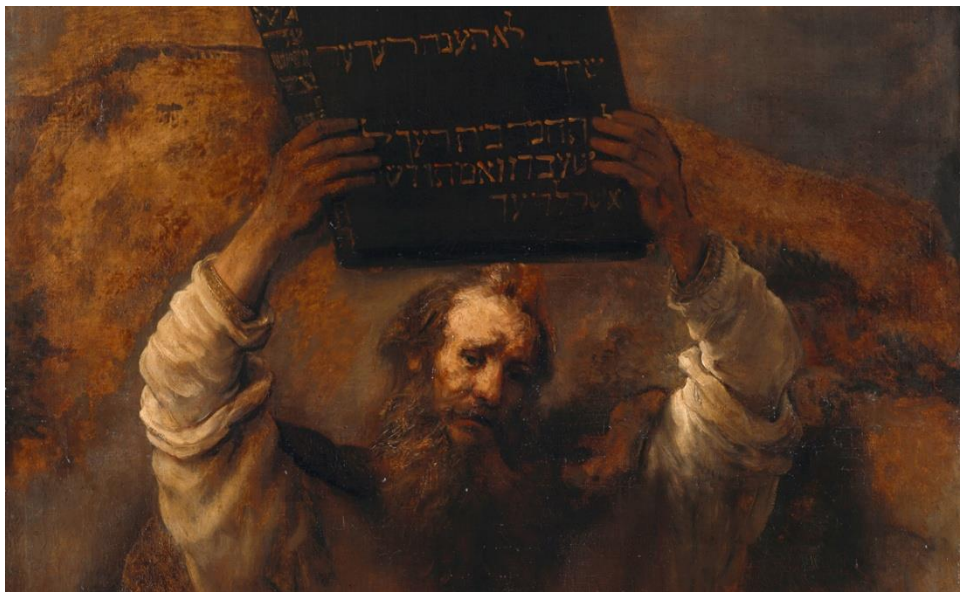




*This Sunday at St. Luke's Blue Ridge
October 22, 2017*

The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity



MOSES WITH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS BY REMBRANDT, 1659

OVERVIEW: THE LAW AND JESUS

The giving of the Law was an important milestone in salvation history. It revealed God's humanizing way of life for His newly freed-from-slavery people. But, it was not the final stop in the journey. The Law also revealed their inability to live up to its demands. "No mere mortal, you see, can be declared to be in the right before God on the basis of the works of the law. What you get through the law is the knowledge of sin," wrote Paul in today's New Testament Lesson (Morning Prayer).

Earlier God had made a promise to Abraham that through the patriarch's offspring "all the peoples of the earth would be blessed." It would be through this particular family that God would deal with the problem identified in Genesis 3, the problem of human sinfulness. The Law was not the final answer to this problem: the offspring promised to Abraham was. This offspring (singular as it turned out) was Christ.

The problem Paul deals with in Romans and in a number of his other letters is that many of those who were descendants of Abraham according to the flesh were stuck at the bus stop of the Law and were refusing to go on to the final destination in God's plan of redemption. In so doing, they remained "under the Law". This meant they continued to cling to such things as circumcision (for the males), food laws and observance of Sabbaths as the boundary markers of God's elect people. These practices were what marked you out as being in the Covenant and thus having a right standing before God.

For Paul, these boundary markers, though good and God-given in their day, were now redundant. With the coming of the Messiah Jesus, there was now only one boundary marker for the people of God: faith in Jesus Christ. Put another way, the faithfulness of Jesus in doing what only He could do calls for our faith in Him. As a result, all who share Christian faith -- no matter their race -- are the true children of Abraham, the Israel of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Law given to Moses was to drive us to Christ. Its moral demands revealed both Jew and Gentile alike as guilty before the law court of heaven, and thus all standing in need of grace. What the Law could not do, God, through the sending of his Son Jesus, has done. (The Rector)

The Collect for the 19th Sunday after Trinity

O God, for as much as without thee we are not able to please thee; Mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

THE EPISTLE (H.C.) – Ephesians 4:17-32 (J.B. Phillips)

Have no more to do with the old life! Learn the new

¹⁷⁻¹⁹ This is my instruction, then, which I give you from God. Do not live any longer as the Gentiles live. For they live blindfold in a world of illusion, and cut off from the life of God through ignorance and insensitiveness. They have stifled their consciences and then surrendered themselves to sensuality, practising any form of impurity which lust can suggest.

²⁰⁻²⁴ But you have learned nothing like that from Christ, if you have really heard his voice and understood the truth that he has taught you. No, what you learned was to fling off the dirty clothes of the old way of living, which were rotted through and through with lust's illusions, and, with yourselves mentally and spiritually re-made, to put on the clean fresh clothes of the new life which was made by God's design for righteousness and the holiness which is no illusion.

²⁵ Finish, then, with lying and tell your neighbour the truth. For we are not separate units but intimately related to each other in Christ.

²⁶⁻²⁷ If you are angry, be sure that it is not out of wounded pride or bad temper. Never go to bed angry—don't give the devil that sort of foothold.

The new life means positive good

²⁸ If you used to be a thief you must not only give up stealing, but you must learn to make an honest living, so that you may be able to give to those in need.

²⁹ Let there be no more foul language, but good words instead—words suitable for the occasion, which God can use to help other people.

³⁰ Never hurt the Holy Spirit. He is, remember, the personal pledge of your eventual full redemption.

³¹⁻³² Let there be no more resentment, no more anger or temper, no more violent self-assertiveness, no more slander and no more malicious remarks, Be kind to each other, be understanding. Be as ready to forgive others as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

NOTE: St. Paul contrasts the Christian and pagan ways of life. He urges his readers to "put on the new man [nature], which after [the likeness of] God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (v.24). (William Sydnor)

THE GOSPEL (H.C.) – St. Matthew 9:1-8 (J.B. Phillips)

Jesus heals in his own town

9 ¹⁻² So Jesus re-embarked on the boat, crossed the lake, and came to his own town. Immediately some people arrived bringing him a paralytic lying flat on his bed. When Jesus saw the faith of those who brought him he said to the paralytic, "Cheer up, my son! Your sins are forgiven."

³⁻⁸ At once some of the scribes thought to themselves, "This man is blaspheming". But Jesus realised what they were thinking, and said to them, "Why must you have such evil thoughts in your minds? Do you think it is easier to say to this man, 'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Get up and walk'? But to make it quite plain that the Son of Man has full authority on earth to forgive sins"—and here he spoke to the paralytic—"Get up, pick up your bed and go home." And the man sprang to his feet and went home. When the crowds saw what had happened they were filled with awe and praised God for giving such power to men.

NOTE: In forgiving the man's sins, Jesus is doing what previously had been done through the rites of the Temple. We are to understand Jesus as the true Temple, the place where God's presence dwells and the place we must go to seek God's mercy and forgiveness. (The Rector)

READINGS FOR 10 A.M. SERVICE

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON (H.C.) – Exodus 19:1-7, 16-19, and 20:1-3 (ESV)

Israel at Mount Sinai

19 On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ² They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, ³ while Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴ You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

⁷ So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him.

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. ¹⁹ And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. ²⁰ The Lord came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain.

The first of the Ten Commandments

20 And God spoke all these words, saying,

² “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

³ “You shall have no other gods before me.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON (H.C.) – Romans 3:1-2, 19-31 (N.T. Wright's translation)

God's determined faithfulness

3 What advantage then, does the Jew possess? What, indeed, is the point of circumcision? A great deal, in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with God's oracles.

¹⁹ Now, we know that whatever the law says, it is speaking to those who are 'in the law', The purpose of this is that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be brought to the bar of God's judgment. No mere mortal, you see, can be declared to be in the right before God on the basis of the works of the law. What you get through the law is the knowledge of sin.

The unveiling of God's covenant justice

²¹ But now, quite apart from the law (though the law and the prophets bore witness to it), God's covenant justice has been displayed. God's covenant justice comes into operation through the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah, for the benefit of all who have faith. For there is no distinction: all sinned, and fell short of God's glory -- and by God's grace they are freely declared to be in the right, to be members of the covenant, through the redemption which is found in the Messiah, Jesus.

Jesus death reveals God's covenant justice (righteousness)

²⁵ God put Jesus forth as the place of mercy, through his faithfulness, by means of his blood. He did this to demonstrate his covenant justice through the passing over (in the divine forbearance) of sins committed beforehand. This was to demonstrate his covenant justice in the present time: that is, that he himself is in the right, and that he declares to be in the right everyone who trusts in the faithfulness of Jesus.

The God of both Jew and Gentile

So what happens to boasting? It is ruled out! Through what sort of law? The law of works? No: through the law of faith! We calculate, you see, that a person is declared to be in the right on the basis of faith, apart from the works of the law. Or does God only belong to the Jews? Doesn't he belong to the nations as well? Yes, of course, to the nations as well, since God is one. He will make the declaration 'in the right' over the circumcised on the basis of faith, and over the uncircumcised through faith.

SERVICES ON TRINITY 19

- **8:15 a.m.** – Holy Communion (said service)

A quiet meditative service

Preacher: The Rev. Ronald O. Wikander

Celebrant: The Rector

Lector: Rose Brass

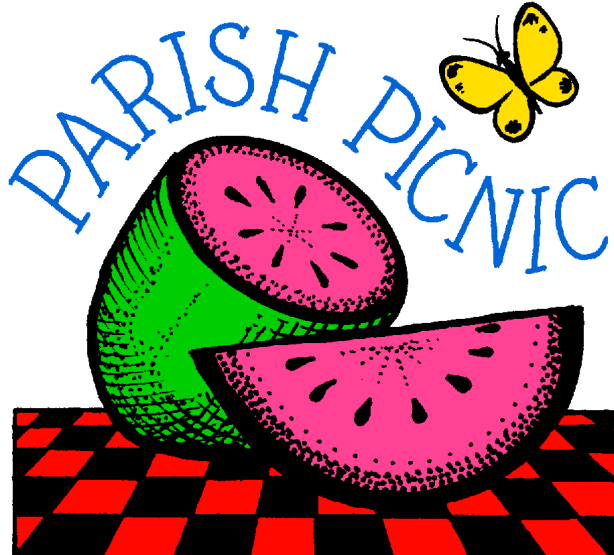
Acolyte / Server: Finn Thoreson

- **10:00 a.m.** Morning Prayer and Sermon (choral)

Joyful celebration of the Supper of the Lord with hymns and exposition of the Scriptures

Preacher: The Rector

Officiant: The Rector
Acolyte: Ruth Johnson
Lay Reader: Roger Johnson
Ushers: Neil and Priscilla McDonald



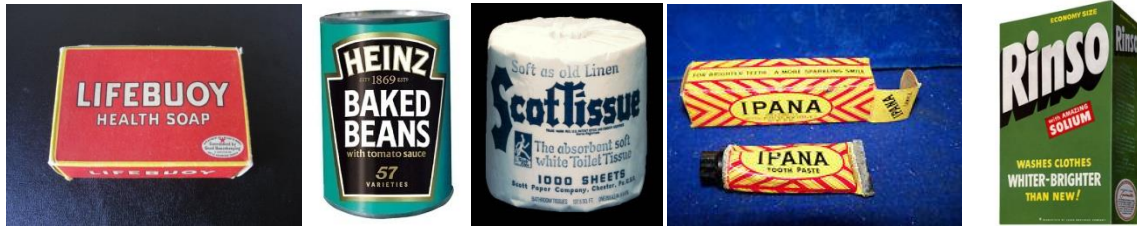
PARISH PICNIC WILL FOLLOW 10 A.M. SERVICE
30th Anniversary Celebration
Informal dress for both service and picnic

CANDY NEED FOR HALLOWEEN SAFE ZONE

The young people of St. Luke's will have a table at the Blue Ridge Halloween Safe Zone. The donation of LOTS of candy would be greatly appreciated.

Fun begins at 5:30 p.m. on Oct. 31. Hundreds of costumed kids and grown-up kids. Bring your pets in costume as well.

REMEMBER THE NEEDY
EVERY TIME YOU COME TO CHURCH



Please bring one or more item for the needy -- paper, soap products, tinned and dried food, etc. Leave in Narthex. Items will be distributed through North Georgia Community Action Agency



A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2017.
Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate.

St. Luke's Church, "The Parish Church of the Mountains," 7 Ewing St., (POB 1821), Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513; [\(706\) 632-8245](tel:7066328245); www.stlukesblueridge.org; stlukes@tds.net.