

Sunday, June 24, 2007
Lectionary 12
Proper 7
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

INTRODUCTION

Before God saves us in baptism, we are held prisoner to hostile spiritual forces. Some of them are known to us, and some are of our own making. Often we do not see or recognize the spirits that trouble us. As we come into God's presence today, a word of liberation is announced to us.

Today the church remembers with thanksgiving the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus who called God's people to leave the past and enter God's future.

John the Baptist

John said, "[Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease." And so his birth is celebrated half a year before Jesus', just as the daylight in the northern hemisphere begins to wane. Jesus honored John as being the greatest prophet.

READINGS

Isaiah 65:1–9

1 Kings 19:1–4[5–7] 8–15a (Semi-continuous)

Psalm 22:19–28

In the midst of the assembly I will praise you. (Ps. 22:22)

Psalm 42—43 (Semi-continuous)

Send out your light and truth, that they may lead me. (Ps. 43:3)

Galatians 3:23–29

Luke 8:26–39

FIRST READING *Isaiah 65:1–9*

God's silence will be broken in the judgment of Israel's faithlessness. Though certain, this judgment will not be total. As the good are separated from the evil, so a remnant will survive, like the wine that results from the crushing of the grapes.

I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask,
to be found by those who did not seek me.
I said, "Here I am, here I am,"
to a nation that did not call on my name.
² I held out my hands all day long
to a rebellious people,
who walk in a way that is not good,
following their own devices;
³ a people who provoke me
to my face continually,
sacrificing in gardens
and offering incense on bricks;
⁴ who sit inside tombs,
and spend the night in secret places;
who eat swine's flesh,
with broth of abominable things in their vessels;
⁵ who say, "Keep to yourself,
do not come near me, for I am too holy for you."
These are a smoke in my nostrils,
a fire that burns all day long.
⁶ See, it is written before me:
I will not keep silent, but I will repay;
I will indeed repay into their laps

⁷ their iniquities and their ancestors' iniquities together,
says the LORD;

because they offered incense on the mountains
and reviled me on the hills,
I will measure into their laps
full payment for their actions.

⁸ Thus says the LORD:

As the wine is found in the cluster,
and they say, "Do not destroy it,
for there is a blessing in it,"
so I will do for my servants' sake,
and not destroy them all.

⁹ I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,
and from Judah inheritors of my mountains;
my chosen shall inherit it,
and my servants shall settle there.

PSALM (ELW) Psalm 22:19–28

¹⁹ But you, O LORD, be not ¹ far away;

O my help, hasten ¹ to my aid.

²⁰ **Deliver me ¹ from the sword,
my life from the power ¹ of the dog.**

²¹ Save me from the ¹ lion's mouth!

From the horns of wild bulls you have ¹ rescued me.

²² **I will declare your name ¹ to my people;
in the midst of the assembly ¹ I will praise you. R**

²³ You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob's ¹ line, give glory.

Stand in awe of the LORD, all you off- ¹ spring of Israel.

²⁴ **For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither is the LORD's face
hid- ¹ den from them;**

but when they cry out, ¹ the LORD hears them.

²⁵ From you comes my praise in the ¹ great assembly;

I will perform my vows in the sight of those who ¹ fear the LORD.

²⁶ **The poor shall eat ¹ and be satisfied.**

Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts ¹ live forever! R

²⁷ All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn ¹ to the LORD;

all the families of nations shall bow ¹ before God.

²⁸ **For dominion belongs ¹ to the LORD,
who rules o- ¹ ver the nations. R**

SECOND READING Galatians 3:23–29

For Paul, baptism is a powerful bond that unites people in faith. Those who are baptized experience a radical equality that removes distinctions based on race, social class, or gender.

²³ Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

GOSPEL Luke 8:26–39

In response to being healed, the Gerasene indicates his willingness to be Jesus' disciple by sitting at Jesus' feet. Unlike the rest of the Gerasenes who, in their fear, asked Jesus to leave, the man who had been healed testified to what Jesus had done for him.

²⁶ Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me" — ²⁹ for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰ Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. ³¹ They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

³² Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴ When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵ Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶ Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷ Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you. So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2007 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.
Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #24176.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.