

Devotional Reflection, Friday, July 26, 2024
Proper 11, the week of the ninth Sunday after Pentecost
The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.

A Traveler Without A Ticket

Key phrases for reflection from today's reading:

20 Thus I make it my ambition to proclaim the good news, not where Christ has already been named, so that I do not build on someone else's foundation, 21 but as it is written, 'Those who have never been told of him shall see, and those who have never heard of him shall understand.'

You will find the full text of today's epistle reading at the end of this reflection.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings (BCP, 977)

AM Psalm 40, 54; PM Psalm 51

Joshua 9:22-10:15; Rom. 15:14-24; Matt. 27:1-10

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (See below.)

David's Reflections

Nobel Prize winner and philosopher Jean Paul Sartre used a vivid metaphor to describe his life-long sense of lack of meaning. Sartre describes his feeling about life at the age of 7: "I had sneaked onto the train and had fallen asleep, and when the ticket-collector shook me and asked for my ticket, I had to admit that I had none." * Toward the end of his autobiographical reflection Sartre says of his adult perspective. "I've again become the traveler without a ticket.*

Unlike Sartre, Paul, in today's reading expresses a burning sense of purpose and direction, to share the message of Christ with non-Jewish people in places where the Christian message had not been heard. He saw his life as a kind of priesthood, an offering of himself for the sake of those outside his native Judaism who had no clue about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor the saving mission of the Christ. He was a traveler with a ticket.

Who are we and why are we on this earth? No matter what our means of earning a living, if we have faith in Jesus Christ, we can affirm that we are Christian. We also can affirm that we are on this earth to love, serve, worship and witness. True, we may find ourselves vocationally challenged, especially if what we do for a

living has become boring and/or does not fit our skill sets. But, even in those moments, we can persist in the desire to worship, to love, to serve, to share, to make a difference as a Christian. We are not travelers without a ticket.

And, almost anything we do can be seen as a form of service. If you are a mechanic, you are providing safe transportation for individuals and families. If you are a teacher, you are joining in God's war on ignorance and seeking to give others the tools for a life long battle with their own and other's ignorance. If you are a physician or a nurse, you are making war on disease, bringing healing as Christ did. And, our work place becomes an arena in which we can live out our personal mission in the world, a mission of witness, service, and love for others.

Every day can be offered up to God as a prayer and as a gift. Every day can be filled with the intent to love others and to live in ways that give to others what we have to offer. Every day can be an offering of ourselves and our energies and our gifts and skills to God. Every day can be a sharing in God's mission of gathering all to the saving love of God. How exciting is that—to live each day expecting outbursts of God's love in our day like lightening flashes?

Sartre may have been a traveler without a ticket, but as people of faith, we are not.

*John Paul Sartre, *The Words* trans. Bernard Frechtman (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1964), pp. 69, 159.

Collect of the Day, Proper II, the ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 231)

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Parents_Mary.htm

Collect of the Feast of the Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Almighty God, heavenly Father, we remember in thanksgiving this day the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and we pray that we all may be made one in the heavenly family of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A Collect for Fridays

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 97)

For those in the Armed Forces of our Country

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 823)

A Prayer for Light

O Lord God Almighty, as you have taught us to call the evening, the morning, and the noonday one day; and have made the sun to know its going down: Dispel the darkness of our hearts, that by your brightness we may know you to be the true God and eternal light, living and reigning for ever and ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 110)

A Collect for Mission

O God, you manifest in your servants the signs of your presence: Send forth upon us the spirit of love, that in companionship with one another your abounding grace may increase among us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 125)

Daily Office Epistle, Romans 15:14-24

14 I myself feel confident about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another.

15 Nevertheless on some points I have written to you rather boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17 In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast of my work for God. 18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ. 20 Thus I make it my ambition to proclaim the good news, not where Christ has already been named, so that I do not build on someone else's foundation, 21 but as it is written, 'Those who

have never been told of him shall see, and those who have never heard of him shall understand.'

22 This is the reason that I have so often been hindered from coming to you. 23But now, with no further place for me in these regions, I desire, as I have for many years, to come to you 24when I go to Spain. For I do hope to see you on my journey and to be sent on by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little while.

Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, *The Book of Common Prayer*

Noonday Prayer, page 103, *Book of Common Prayer*

Order of Worship for Evening (Vespers), p 109, *Book of Common Prayer*

Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, *Book of Common Prayer*

Compline (Night Prayer), page 127, *Book of Common Prayer*

Daily Devotionals, page 136, *Book of Common Prayer*