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## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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July 5, 2020

Anglican Parish of Raymond Terrace  
[www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org](http://www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org)

## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Pray

May I speak to you in the name of GOD – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen



Our first reading from Genesis describes Eliezer telling his story to Laban, the grandson of Abraham's brother and how he spoke openly of GOD and His goodness. Often, we do the opposite – afraid that we will be misunderstood, rejected, or seen as too religious. Instead, we should share openly what GOD is doing for us. <sup>▲</sup>When Rebekah had decided to go with Eliezer and they arrived at their destination, our passage tells us: <sup>64</sup>And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel, <sup>65</sup>and said to the servant, 'Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?' The servant said, 'It is my master.' So she took her veil and covered herself. When Rebekah learned that the man coming to greet her was Isaac – her husband-to-be – she followed 2 oriental customs. She

dismounted from her camel to show respect and she placed a veil over her face as a bride.

Psalm 45 is called a Messianic psalm because it prophetically describes the Messiah's future relationship to the Church – His body of believers.

A few weeks ago, I mentioned that chapters 6,7, and 8 of Paul's letter to the Romans deal with sanctification – the change GOD makes in our lives as we grow in the faith. Chapter 6 explained that believers are free from sin's control. Chapter 7 discusses the continuing struggle believers have with sin. And chapter 8 describes how we can have victory over sin.

We're about ½ way through chapter 7 and as I read today's passage, I immediately thought of ^Donald Rumsfeld, former US Secretary of Defence when he famously spoke about knowns and unknowns and unknown knowns and whatever else he said. Let's see what Paul tells us:

1. ^What I want to do I do not do but what I hate.

2. ^If I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.
3. ^It is no longer I who do it but it is sin living in me.
4. ^I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.
5. ^I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do – this I keep doing.
6. ^If I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

So, Paul share 3 lessons that he learned in trying to deal with his sinful desires:

1. ^Knowledge of the rules is not the answer. Paul felt fine as long as he did not understand what the law demanded. When he learned the truth, he knew he was doomed.
2. ^Self-determination – struggling in one's own strength – doesn't succeed. Paul found himself sinning in ways that weren't even attractive to him.

3. ^Becoming a Christian does not stamp out all sin and temptation from a person's life

Being born again takes a moment of faith; but becoming like CHRIST is a lifelong process. Paul compares Christian growth to a strenuous race or fight. Paul continues to stress that no one in the world is innocent, no one deserves to be saved – none of us. We must all depend totally on the work of CHRIST for our salvation. IT CANNOT BE EARNED.

The “law at work in me” is the sin deep within us – our vulnerability to sin – everything in us more loyal to our old way of life.

There is a great tension in daily Christian experience. The conflict is that we agree with GOD's commands but cannot do them. As a result, we are painfully aware of our sin – and this struggle is just as real for us as it was for Paul. The only antidote for this pain is the power JESUS gave us – power that can lift us to victory.

Our Gospel passage begins with JESUS condemning the attitude of His generation. No matter what he said

or did, they took the opposite view. They were cynical and sceptical because He challenged their comfortable, secure, and self-centred lives. Too often we justify our inconsistencies because listening to GOD may require us to change the way we live. Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom were ancient cities with a long-standing reputation for wickedness <sup>1</sup>. Each was destroyed by GOD for its evil. The people of Bethsaida, Chorazin and Capernaum saw JESUS firsthand; and yet they stubbornly refused to repent of their sins and believe in Him. JESUS said that if some of the wickedest cities in the world had seen Him, they would have repented. Because Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum saw JESUS but did not believe, they would suffer even greater punishment than that of the wicked cities that did not see JESUS. Similarly, nations and cities with Churches on every corner and Bibles in every home will have no excuse on judgement day if they do not repent and believe.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 18, 19; Ezekiel 27, 28

^Verses 25 and 26 are a prayer of JESUS to His Father. He mentions 2 kinds of people in His prayer:

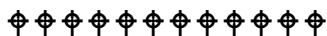
1. “Wise” – these people were arrogant in their own knowledge; and
2. “Little Children” – humbly open to receive the truth of GOD’s Word.

We need to remember that our wisdom comes from GOD and that only He holds all the answers.

In the Old Testament, the word “k n o w” means more than knowledge, it implies intimate relationship. The communion between GOD the Father and GOD the Son is the core of their relationship. For anyone else to know GOD, GOD must reveal Himself to that person, by the Son’s choice. How fortunate we are that JESUS has clearly revealed to us, GOD – His truth, and how we can know Him.

I think we are all aware of what a yoke is. We often carry heavy yokes ourselves – perhaps the yoke of sin, excessive demands of others, oppression or persecution, or weariness in search for GOD. JESUS

frees us from all these burdens. The rest that JESUS promises is love, healing and peace with GOD – but not the end of all our labour. A relationship with GOD changes meaningless, wearisome toil into spiritual productivity and purpose. How does JESUS make our yoke easy and give us rest when the yoke is still a tool of burden? The yoke emphasises the challenges, work, and difficulties of partnering with JESUS in our lives. Responsibilities can weigh us down – even the effort of straying true to GOD. But JESUS’ yoke remains easy compared with the crushing alternative. JESUS does not offer us a life of luxurious ease – we still have to go about our daily tasks – but they are shared – with the weight falling on bigger shoulders than ours. Someone with more pulling power is up front, helping. Suddenly, we are participating in life’s responsibilities with a great Partner – who allows us to smile rather than frown and sing, rather than grizzle.



Our society – with its reliance on computers, mobile phones, and email – along with games entertainment



and social media – provide us with many options to pass our time. People seem to rush around from one place to another and then to another – without even a thought for anything else but rushing. Rest is hopefully something you get when you eventually fall into bed. Our current Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in September last year, posted this quote from one of his predecessors, Archbishop Michael Ramsey – Archbishop of Canterbury between 1961 and 1974: **^Does anything matter more in our hurried, noisy, contemporary life, than that every Christian should find time daily of real quiet for the soul's waiting upon GOD.**

Jesus invites us to rest. He even gave us examples through His ministry – He rested in the back of a boat in a storm, and often took time out, alone, to commune with GOD the Father. In the Bible, God rests on the seventh day, and Jesus regularly retreats by himself to pray and rest. Rest is vital to our productivity, to our well-being—and to our faith.

But even when we are paid to rest it's hard to do it. Even if we take vacation or time away from work or other demands, we have the ability to be constantly connected through texts, emails, and news alerts. What's more, at the tip of our fingertips are mobile devices that stimulate and engage our minds through games, entertainment, and social media. It can take work and real commitment to truly rest. For others, rest from work is much more elusive. Today, way too much of our labour force work on a casual basis across many industries and face many barriers to rest – simply because if they don't work, they don't get paid. Paul reminds us in his letter to the Philippians: **13I can do all things through him who strengthens me.** Under our own strength, we run out of puff pretty quickly – but when we partner with JESUS, we can turn wearisome toil into spiritual productivity and purpose.



May we pray:

Gracious GOD, you have called us into the friendship of your covenant, and you care for us as a parent. May we

rest in you. May our communion with you be a sign of our devotion and of our desire to live in charity with people of every creed and culture. This we pray in the name of JESUS. Amen

Life Application Study Bible

Daily Prayer 2020

[https://www.christiancentury.org/blog-post/sundays-coming/weary-and-heavy-laden-matthew-1116-19-25-](https://www.christiancentury.org/blog-post/sundays-coming/weary-and-heavy-laden-matthew-1116-19-25-30?utm_source=Christian+Century+Newsletter&utm_campaign=d28a4e19b9-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_09_11_08_32_COPY_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b00cd618da-d28a4e19b9-86182999)

[30?utm\\_source=Christian+Century+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=d28a4e19b9-](https://www.christiancentury.org/blog-post/sundays-coming/weary-and-heavy-laden-matthew-1116-19-25-30?utm_source=Christian+Century+Newsletter&utm_campaign=d28a4e19b9-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_09_11_08_32_COPY_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b00cd618da-d28a4e19b9-86182999)

[EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_09\\_11\\_08\\_32\\_COPY\\_08&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_b00cd618da-d28a4e19b9-86182999](https://www.christiancentury.org/blog-post/sundays-coming/weary-and-heavy-laden-matthew-1116-19-25-30?utm_source=Christian+Century+Newsletter&utm_campaign=d28a4e19b9-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_09_11_08_32_COPY_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b00cd618da-d28a4e19b9-86182999)

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/3-july/faith/sunday-s-readings/4th-sunday-after-trinity>