

Readings 22 October – St Hilda’s

Isaiah 45:1-7 (NRSVA)

Cyrus, God’s Instrument

45:1 Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped
to subdue nations before him
and strip kings of their robes,
to open doors before him—
and the gates shall not be closed:

² I will go before you
and level the mountains,^[a]

I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut through the bars of iron,

³ I will give you the treasures of darkness
and riches hidden in secret places,
so that you may know that it is I, the LORD,
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.

⁴ For the sake of my servant Jacob,
and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name,
I surname you, though you do not know me.

⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no other;
besides me there is no god.

I arm you, though you do not know me,
⁶ so that they may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is no one besides me;
I am the LORD, and there is no other.

⁷ I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe;
I the LORD do all these things.

Footnotes:

[Isaiah 45:2](#) Q Ms Gk: MT *the swellings*

1Thessalonians 1:1-10 (NRSVA)

Salutation

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace.

The Thessalonians' Faith and Example

2 We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly
3 remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4 For we know, brothers and sisters[a] beloved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of people we proved to be among you for your sake. 6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place where your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. 9 For the people of those regions[b] report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

Footnotes:

1 Thessalonians 1:4 Gk brothers

1 Thessalonians 1:9 Gk For they

Matthew 22:15-22 (NRSVA)

The Question about Paying Taxes

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. ¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?’ ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, ‘Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax.’ And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ Then he said to them, ‘Whose head is this, and whose title?’ ²¹ They answered, ‘The emperor’s.’ Then he said to them, ‘Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ ²² When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

The Meaning of Faith

Hebrews 11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² Indeed, by faith^[a] our ancestors received approval. ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.^[b]

The Examples of Abel, Enoch, and Noah

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable^[c] sacrifice than Cain’s. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith^[d] he still speaks. ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken so that he did not experience death; and ‘he was not found, because God had taken him.’ For it was attested before he was taken away

that ‘he had pleased God.’⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.⁷ By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith.

The Faith of Abraham

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going.⁹ By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.¹⁰ For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.¹¹ By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised.¹² Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, ‘as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.’

¹³ All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth,¹⁴ for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return.¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son,¹⁸ of whom he had been told, ‘It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named after you.’¹⁹ He considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead—and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.²⁰ By faith Isaac invoked blessings for the future on Jacob and Esau.²¹ By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, ‘bowing in worship over the top of his staff.’²² By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave instructions about his burial.²³

The Faith of Moses

²³ By faith Moses was hidden by his parents for three months after his birth, because they saw that the child was beautiful; and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh’s daughter,²⁵ choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.²⁶ He considered abuse suffered for the Christ²⁷ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward.²⁸ By faith he left Egypt, unafraid of the king’s anger; for he persevered as though he saw him who is invisible.²⁹ By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.³⁰

The Faith of Other Israelite Heroes

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned.³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell after

they had been encircled for seven days.³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient,^[k] because she had received the spies in peace.

³² And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,³⁴ quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.³⁵ Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection.³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.³⁷ They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two,^[l] they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented—³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹ Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised,⁴⁰ since God had provided something better so that they would not, without us, be made perfect.

James 2:14-26 (NRSVA)

Faith without Works Is Dead

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters,^[a] if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food,¹⁶ and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill’, and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? ¹⁷ So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, ‘You have faith and I have works.’ Show me your faith without works, and I by my works will show you my faith. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder. ²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you senseless person, that faith without works is barren? ²¹ Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. ²³ Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness’, and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road? ²⁶ For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.