

CHURCH OF TE HEPARA PAI

Sunday 08 February 2015

Te Rātapu Tuarima o He wā noa iho / 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
JESUS, WHOSE SERVICE IS FREEDOM



But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run,
and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31 KJV

JESUS,

WHOSE SERVICE IS FREEDOM

SENTENCE OF THE DAY:

Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles. (Isaiah 40:31)

COLLECT OF THE DAY – Let us pray:

Almighty God, you have called us to serve you, yet without your grace we are not able to please you; mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

IT IS FOR FREEDOM THAT
CHRIST HAS SET US FREE
-GALATIANS 5:1-

**OBEDIENCE
TO GOD IS
THE
KEY TO
FREEDOM**

Captured Fire

The Sunday Homilies



Jesus, Whose Service is Freedom

What is freedom in Christ? How can one experience true freedom in Christ? We experience true freedom in Christ by knowing him when we turn away from sin and *invite him into our heart to obey him* (refer to the two pictures at bottom of front page), walking in his ways, and being involved with the changes

he makes in and through our life as we focus on service to him and to others. This freedom goes beyond the human freedoms sought after in this world, providing peace in this life and freedom with Christ forevermore.

So after we experience true freedom in Christ by coming to know Christ, how do we daily experience true freedom in Christ by walking in his ways and being involved with the changes he makes in and through our life as we focus on service to him and to others? The King James Version of verse 31 of the Old Testament passage for today from Isaiah 40 has *“But they that wait upon the Lord”* (refer to the full verse on top picture on front page), which means *“But those who trust in the Lord”* as given in the version we are using on the opposite page. So we are called to *‘wait on the Lord.’* This implies complete dependence on God and a willingness to allow him to decide the conditions under which one serves him. Those who learn to *‘wait on the Lord’* find freedom in him. He has a way of helping us break free from the things that bind us. He has a way of helping us to get above our problems, other people, sins, valleys, emotions, and so on. He has a way of allowing us to soar above the difficulties of this life (refer to top picture on front page and note the soaring eagle).

Have you ever experienced such a time in your life? Has there been a time when it seems like there was no hope and no way out, and the Lord gave you the strength to rise above it all? The Lord here in Isaiah 40:31 promises to give you the strength you need to be able to overcome the storms in your life and fly high above them through his grace. Those who trust in their own strength will fail, no matter how capable they may appear to be. But those who trust in God will be constantly strengthened by his power, which will lead them on in serving him victoriously and in freedom.

The pātai you may now ask is, *“How does a person ‘wait on the Lord’?”* To *‘wait on the Lord’* requires an obedient attitude (refer to bottom right picture on front page), prayer, hope, and faith. Here is how Jesus *‘waited on the Lord.’* *“It was very early in the morning and still dark. Jesus got up and left the house. He went to a place where he could be alone. There he prayed”* (Mark 1:35—refer to bottom picture on back page). We have little hope of living in true freedom in Christ unless we seriously work on having a **devotional time** each day.

There is another sense in which we experience freedom in Christ in serving him. In serving Christ by preaching the message of the gospel, Saint Paul was free from being bound by cultural customs or the need to use all his rights as a person who preaches the good news. For instance, he preaches freely without claiming his rights to financial support. He sacrifices his own freedom in order to serve others, his aim being to win as many as he can to Christ.

In the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit - amen.



The Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 40:21-31

A reading from Isaiah chapter 40 beginning at verse 21.

²¹ Don't you know who made everything? Haven't you heard about him? Hasn't it been told to you from the beginning? Haven't you understood it ever since the earth was made? ²² God sits on his throne high above the earth. Its people look like grasshoppers to him. He spreads out the heavens like a cover. He sets it up like a tent to live in. ²³ He takes the power of princes away from them. He reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. ²⁴ They are planted. They are scattered like seeds. They put down roots in the ground. But as soon as that happens, God blows on them and they dry up. Then a windstorm sweeps them away like straw.

²⁵ "So who will you compare me with? Who is equal to me?" says the Holy One.

²⁶ Look up toward the sky. Who created everything you see? The LORD causes the stars to come out at night one by one. He calls out each one of them by name. His power and strength are great. So none of the stars is missing.

²⁷ Family of Jacob, why do you complain, "The LORD doesn't notice our condition"? People of Israel, why do you say, "Our God doesn't pay any attention to our rightful claims"? ²⁸ Don't you know who made everything? Haven't you heard about him? The LORD is the God who lives forever. He created everything on earth. He won't become worn out or get tired. No one will ever know how great his understanding is. ²⁹ He gives strength to those who are tired. He gives power to those who are weak. ³⁰ Even young people become worn out and get tired. Even the best of them trip and fall. ³¹ ***But those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.***

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks be to God.



The Epistle Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

A reading from 1 Corinthians chapter 9 beginning at verse 16.

¹⁶ But when I preach the good news, I can't brag. I have to preach it. How terrible it will be for me if I do not preach the good news! ¹⁷ If I preach because I want to, I get a reward. If I preach because I have to, I'm only doing my duty.

¹⁸ Then what reward do I get? Here is what it is. I am able to preach the good news free of charge. And I can do this without using all my rights as a person who preaches the good news.

Paul Uses His Freedom to Share the Good News

¹⁹ ***I am free and don't belong to anyone. But I have made myself a slave to everyone. I do it to win as many as I can to Christ.*** ²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew. That was to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one who was under the law. I did this even though I myself am not under the law. That was to win those under the law.

[CONTINUED OVER PAGE]

²¹ To those who don't have the law I became like one who doesn't have the law. I did this even though I am not free from God's law. I am under Christ's law. Now I can win those who don't have the law. ²² To those who are weak I became weak. That was to win the weak. I have become all things to all people. I have done this so that in all possible ways I might save some. ²³ I do all this because of the good news. And I want to share in its blessings.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Reading: Mark 1:29-39

The Holy Gospel according to Mark chapter 1 beginning at verse 29. Praise and Glory to God.

Jesus Heals Many People

²⁹ Jesus and those with him left the synagogue. Right away they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was lying in bed with a fever. They told Jesus about her right away. ³¹ So he went to her. He took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her. Then she began to serve them.

³² That evening after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who were sick. They also brought all who were controlled by demons. ³³ All the people in town gathered at the door. ³⁴ Jesus healed many of them. They had all kinds of sicknesses. He also drove out many demons. But he would not let the demons speak, because they knew who he was.

Jesus Prays in a Quiet Place

³⁵ *It was very early in the morning and still dark. Jesus got up and left the house. He went to a place where he could be alone. There he prayed.* ³⁶ Simon and his friends went to look for Jesus. ³⁷ When they found him, they called out, "Everyone is looking for you!"

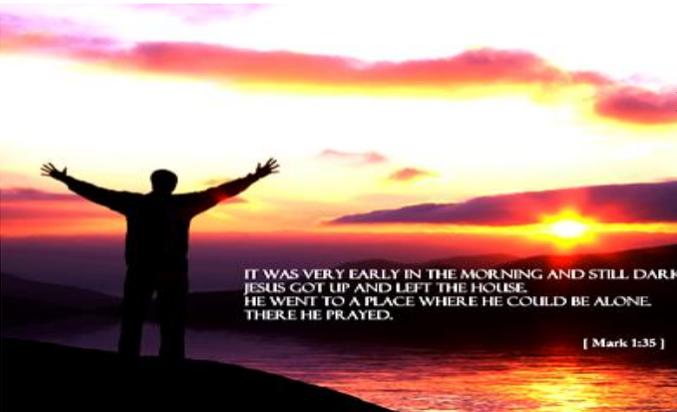
³⁸ Jesus replied, "Let's go somewhere else. I want to go to the nearby towns. I must preach there also. That is why I have come." ³⁹ So he traveled all around Galilee. He preached in their synagogues. He also drove out demons.

This is the Gospel of Christ. Praise to Christ, the Word.

4 PANUI

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE: WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY, 2015 AT 7:00PM.

PLEASE RETURN LAST YEAR'S PALM CROSSES TO USHER NEXT SUNDAY FOR USE IN PREPARING THE ASH FOR THIS SERVICE.



IT WAS VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING AND STILL DARK
JESUS GOT UP AND LEFT THE HOUSE.
HE WENT TO A PLACE WHERE HE COULD BE ALONE.
THERE HE PRAYED.

[Mark 1:35]