

Elizabeth Propst:

Welcome to Morning Prayers here in the Appleton Chapel. Our speaker this morning is Alden Fossett, Harvard College class of 2021, and the Kellogg Fellow at the Episcopal Chaplaincy.

Please rise as you're able, and join in our responsive Psalm, number 19, in your black psalter.

The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handy work.

Congregation:

Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

Elizabeth Propst:

There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard.

Congregation:

Yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun.

Elizabeth Propst:

Which comes out like a bride groom from his wedding canopy. And like a strong man, runs its course with joy.

Congregation:

Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.

Elizabeth Propst:

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple.

Congregation:

the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes.

Elizabeth Propst:

the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

Congregation:

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

Choir:

(singing)

Alden Fossett:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Alden Fossett:

Here begins the 20th verse of the 18th chapter of the Book of Exodus.

"And Thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws. And shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do." Here ends the lesson.

Last semester, Harvard chaplains led almost a dozen in-person Harvard and the Landscape of Slavery tours, that engaged with the ongoing legacies of African and indigenous enslavement here, through silence and stillness. There are six tours being offered in the Spring, beginning after Easter, and I highly encourage you to register for one. They are all free and open to the public. On the tour's route, we walk through the law school's campus and pass Austin Hall. The lesson for this morning is inscribed on the building.

In December 1880, Edward Austin, a wealthy Boston textile merchant, donated \$100,000 to support the construction of a new law school building in honor of his brother, Samuel. Austin was very wealthy, and when he died in 1899, he left \$1,100,000 to public charities and educational institutions. Accounting for inflation, the bequests from Austin total almost \$40 million. Harvard received \$18 million. MIT received \$14 million. Radcliffe, Roanoke College, and Tuskegee, received just a million dollars each.

And thou shall teach them ordinances and laws, and shall show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do do. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, gives this advice to Moses, while the Israelites are still in the desert. Jethro tells Moses that he should not sit in judgment over disputes the Israelites have with each other by himself. Instead, Jethro encourages Moses to teach the law, and show them the way, and to appoint judges and officers to help him.

I've walked past this inscription on the tours almost a dozen times. And after the 4th or 5th time, I realized that we had been given a significant gift and its presence on campus, even though we didn't intentionally plan the route to include it. Because suddenly, the way that I moved through the world was the work that I had to do. Suddenly, my observance of the law, to love God and to love my neighbor as myself, was the very act of walking with the legacies of slavery hidden in plain sight and buried in the land.

Early on Thursday morning of this week, several pilgrims from the Episcopal Chaplaincy will depart Harvard Square, and begin a 53-mile walk to Mount Monadnock in Rindge, New Hampshire. On Eastern morning at the Cathedral of the Pines, we will attend an ecumenical sunrise service. Depending only on a map, the generosity of strangers, and the mercy of God, we will observe the holiest days of the year, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, by offering ourselves.

And this Holy Week, we recall our Lord's passion, and enter again, a story we already know, by offering ourselves. For once more, we will be unable to keep watch and pray. Once more, we will deny and betray the one who has set us free. Once more, we will crucify Him. Let us pray.

Oh God, who by the passion of Thy blessed Son, didst make an instrument of shameful death to be, unto us, the means of life. Grant us so to glory and the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of Thy Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God forever and ever. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Elizabeth Propst:

Please rise in body or spirit for the Lord's Prayer.

Congregation:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Elizabeth Propst:

And please join in our closing hymn, Alone Thou Goest Forth, O Lord, number 149 in your Crimson hymnal.

Elizabeth Propst:

(singing).

Elizabeth Propst:

Christ has no hands in this world but your hands, and no voice in this world but your voice. May our hands and our voices do the work of justice and of love, today and all days. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.