

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost , September 27, 2020

The Collect: O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Track 1 Old Testament: Exodus 17:1-7 read from the International Children's Bible

17 The whole Israelite community left the Desert of Sin. They traveled from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim. But there was no water there for the people to drink. 2 So they quarreled with Moses. They said, "Give us water to drink."

But Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why are you testing the Lord?"

3 But the people were very thirsty for water. So they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Was it to kill us, our children and our farm animals with thirst?"

4 So Moses cried to the Lord, "What can I do with these people? They are almost ready to kill me with stones."

5 The Lord said to Moses, "Go ahead of the people of Israel. And take some of the elders of Israel with you. Carry with you the walking stick that you used to strike the Nile River. Now go! 6 I will stand in front of you on a rock at Mount Sinai. Hit that rock with the stick, and water will come out of it. Then the people can drink." Moses did these things as the elders of Israel watched. 7 Moses named that place Massah because the Israelites tested the Lord. They asked, "Is the Lord with us or not?" He also named it Meribah because they quarreled.

The Word of the Lord

Track 1 Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 Hear my teaching, O my people; *

incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

2 I will open my mouth in a parable; *

I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.

3 That which we have heard and known,

and what our forefathers have told us, *

we will not hide from their children.

4 We will recount to generations to come

the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the Lord, *

and the wonderful works he has done.

12 He worked marvels in the sight of their forefathers, *

in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.

13 He split open the sea and let them pass through; *

he made the waters stand up like walls.

14 He led them with a cloud by day, *

and all the night through with a glow of fire.

15 He split the hard rocks in the wilderness *

and gave them drink as from the great deep.

16 He brought streams out of the cliff, *

and the waters gushed out like rivers.

Track 2 Old Testament: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 read from the read from the International Children's Bible

18 The Lord spoke his word to me. He said: 2 “What do you mean by using this saying about the land of Israel:

‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes.

And that caused the children to grind their teeth from the sour taste’?

3 “As surely as I live, says the Lord God, this is true: You will not use this saying in Israel

anymore. 4 Every living thing belongs to me. The life of the father is mine. And the life of the son is mine. The person who sins will die.

25 “But you say, ‘What the Lord does isn’t fair.’ Hear now, people of Israel. I am fair. It is what you do that is not fair! 26 A good person might stop doing good. He might do wrong and die because of it. He will die because he did wrong. 27 An evil person might stop doing the evil things he has done. And he might do what is fair and right. He will save his life. 28 He thought about it and stopped doing all the sins he had done. He will surely live. He will not die. 29 But the people of Israel still say, ‘What the Lord does isn’t fair.’ People of Israel, I am fair. It is what you do that is not fair.

30 “So I will judge you, people of Israel. I will judge each person by what he does, says the Lord God. Change your hearts. Stop all your sinning. Then sin will not bring your ruin. 31 Get rid of all the sins you have done. And get for yourselves a new heart and a new way to think. Why do you want to die, people of Israel? 32 I do not want anyone to die. So change your hearts and lives so you may live.

The Word of the Lord

Track 2 Psalm 25:1-8: read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;

my God, I put my trust in you; *

let me not be humiliated,

nor let my enemies triumph over me.

2 Let none who look to you be put to shame; *

let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.

3 Show me your ways, O Lord, *

and teach me your paths.

4 Lead me in your truth and teach me, *

for you are the God of my salvation;

in you have I trusted all the day long.

5 Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, *

for they are from everlasting.

6 Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; *

remember me according to your love

and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

7 Gracious and upright is the Lord; *

therefore he teaches sinners in his way.

8 He guides the humble in doing right *

and teaches his way to the lowly.

Epistle: Philippians 2:1-13 read from the Lexham English Bible

2 Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 complete my joy, so that you are in agreement, having the same love, united in spirit, having one purpose. 3 Do nothing according to selfish ambition or according to empty conceit, but in humility considering one another better than yourselves, 4 each of you not looking out for your own interests, but also each of you for the interests of others.

5 Think this in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, existing in the form of God,

did not consider being equal with God something to be grasped,

7 but emptied himself

by taking the form of a slave,

by becoming in the likeness of people.

And being found in appearance like a man,

8 he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to the point of death,

that is, death on a cross.

9 Therefore also God exalted him

and graciously granted him the name above every name,

10 so that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bow,

of those in heaven and of those on earth and of those under the earth,

11 and every tongue confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

12 Therefore my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 For the one at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure, is God.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32 read from the Message Bible

23 Then he was back in the Temple, teaching. The high priests and leaders of the people came up and demanded, “Show us your credentials. Who authorized you to teach here?”

24-25 Jesus responded, “First let me ask you a question. You answer my question and I’ll answer yours. About the baptism of John—who authorized it: heaven or humans?”

25-27 They were on the spot and knew it. They pulled back into a huddle and whispered, “If we say ‘heaven,’ he’ll ask us why we didn’t believe him; if we say ‘humans,’ we’re up against it with the people because they all hold John up as a prophet.” They decided to concede that round to Jesus. “We don’t know,” they answered.

Jesus said, “Then neither will I answer your question.

28 “Tell me what you think of this story: A man had two sons. He went up to the first and said, ‘Son, go out for the day and work in the vineyard.’

29 “The son answered, ‘I don’t want to.’ Later on he thought better of it and went.

30 “The father gave the same command to the second son. He answered, ‘Sure, glad to.’

But he never went.

31-32 “Which of the two sons did what the father asked?”

They said, “The first.”

Jesus said, “Yes, and I tell you that crooks and whores are going to precede you into God’s kingdom. John came to you showing you the right road. You turned up your noses at him, but the crooks and whores believed him. Even when you saw their changed lives, you didn’t care enough to change and believe him.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On September 30 we celebrate the life of Jerome, Priest, and Monk of Bethlehem. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Jerome was the foremost biblical scholar of the ancient Church. His Latin translation of the Bible from early Hebrew and Greek texts, known as the Vulgate version, along with his commentaries and homilies on the biblical books, have made him a major intellectual force in the Western Church.

Jerome was born in Stridon, in the Roman province of Dalmatia, about 347, and was converted and baptized during his student days in Rome. On a visit to Trier, in the Rhineland, he found himself attracted to the monastic life, which he tested in a brief but unhappy experience as a hermit in the Syrian desert of Syria. At Antioch in 378, he reluctantly allowed himself to be ordained a presbyter, and there continued his studies in Hebrew and Greek. The following year, he was in Constantinople as a student of Gregory of Nazianzus. From 382 to 384, he was secretary to Pope Damasus I in Rome and spiritual director of many noble Roman ladies, who were becoming interested in the monastic life. It was Damasus who set him to the task of making a new translation of the Bible into Latin—the vulgus tongue used by the common people, as distinguished from the classical Greek—hence the name of his translation, the Vulgate.

After the Pope's death, Jerome returned to the East and established a monastery at Bethlehem, where he lived and worked until his death on September 30, 420. He was buried in a chapel beneath the Church of the Nativity, near the traditional place of our Lord's birth.

Jerome's irascible disposition, pride of learning, and extravagant promotion of asceticism involved him in many bitter controversies over both theological and exegetical questions. Yet he was candid at times in admitting his failings, never ambitious for churchly honors, a militant champion of orthodoxy, an indefatigable worker, and a literary stylist with rare gifts.

Let us pray: O God, who gave us the holy Scriptures for a light to shine upon our path: Grant us, after the example of your servant Jerome, so to learn of you according to your Holy Word, that we may find the light that shines more and more to the perfect day; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**