

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 29th

The Collect and Psalms will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer
The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from the God's Word Bible

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: Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22

7 So the king and Haman came to have dinner with Queen Esther. 2 On the second day, while they were drinking wine, the king asked Esther, "What is your request, Queen Esther? It will be granted to you. And what would you like? Even if it is up to half of the kingdom, it will be granted."

3 Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, Your Majesty, spare my life. That is my request. And spare the life of my people. That is what I ask for. 4 You see, we—my people and I—have been sold so that we can be wiped out, killed, and destroyed. If our men and women had only been sold as slaves, I would have kept silent because the enemy is not worth troubling you about, Your Majesty."

5 Then King Xerxes interrupted Queen Esther and said, "Who is this person? Where is the person who has dared to do this?"

6 Esther answered, "Our vicious enemy is this wicked man Haman!" Then Haman became panic-stricken in the presence of the king and queen.

9 Harbona, one of the eunuchs present with the king, said, "What a coincidence! The 75-foot pole Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke up for the well-being of the king, is still

standing at Haman's house."

The king responded, "Hang him on it!" 10 So servants hung Haman's "dead body" on the very pole he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king got over his raging anger.

20 Now, Mordecai wrote these things down and sent official letters to all the Jews in all the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far. 21 He established the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar as days they must observe every year. 22 They were to observe them just like the days when the Jews freed themselves from their enemies. In that month their grief turned to joy and their mourning into a holiday. He declared that these days are to be days for feasting and celebrating and for sending gifts of food to one another, especially gifts to the poor.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Track 1 Psalm: Psalm 124

- 1 If the Lord had not been on our side, *
let Israel now say;
- 2 If the Lord had not been on our side, *
when enemies rose up against us;
- 3 Then would they have swallowed us up alive *
in their fierce anger toward us;
- 4 Then would the waters have overwhelmed us *
and the torrent gone over us;
- 5 Then would the raging waters *
have gone right over us.
- 6 Blessed be the Lord! *
he has not given us over to be a prey for their teeth.
- 7 We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler; *
the snare is broken, and we have escaped.
- 8 Our help is in the Name of the Lord, *
the maker of heaven and earth.

Track 2 Old Testament: Numbers 11:4-6,10-16,24-29

4 Some foreigners among the Israelites had a strong craving for “other kinds of” food. Even the Israelites started crying again and said, “If only we had meat to eat! 5 Remember all the free fish we ate in Egypt and the cucumbers, watermelons, leeks, onions, and garlic we had? 6 But now we’ve lost our appetite! Everywhere we look there’s nothing but manna!”

10 Moses heard people from every family crying at the entrance to their tents. The Lord became very angry, and Moses didn’t like it either. 11 So he asked, “Lord, why have you brought me this trouble? How have I displeased you that you put the burden of all these people on me? 12 Am I their mother? Did I give birth to them? Are you really asking me to carry them in my arms—as a nurse carries a baby—all the way to the land you promised their ancestors with an oath? 13 Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep crying for me to give them meat to eat. 14 I can’t take care of all these people by myself. This is too much work for me! 15 If this is how you’re going to treat me, why don’t you just kill me? I can’t face this trouble anymore.”

16 The Lord answered Moses, “Bring me 70 Israelite men who you know are leaders and officers of the people. Take them to the tent of meeting, and have them stand with you.

24 Moses went out and told the people what the Lord said. He gathered 70 of the leaders of the people and had them stand around the tent. 25 Then the Lord came down in the “column of” smoke and spoke with him. He took some of the Spirit that was on Moses and put it on the 70 leaders. When the Spirit came to rest on them, they prophesied, but they never prophesied again.

26 Two men, named Eldad and Medad, had stayed in the camp. They were on the list with the other leaders but hadn’t gone with them to the tent. The Spirit came to rest on them, too, and they prophesied in the camp.

27 Then a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” 28 So Joshua, son of Nun, who had been Moses’ assistant ever since he was a young man, spoke up and said, “Stop them, sir!”

29 But Moses asked him, “Do you think you need to stand up for me? I wish all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them.”

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Track 2 Psalm: Psalm 19:7-14

7 The law of the Lord is perfect

and revives the soul; *

the testimony of the Lord is sure

and gives wisdom to the innocent.

8 The statutes of the Lord are just

and rejoice the heart; *

the commandment of the Lord is clear

and gives light to the eyes.

9 The fear of the Lord is clean

and endures for ever; *

the judgments of the Lord are true

and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold,

more than much fine gold, *

sweeter far than honey,

than honey in the comb.

11 By them also is your servant enlightened, *

and in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can tell how often he offends? *

cleanse me from my secret faults.

13 Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins;

let them not get dominion over me; *

then shall I be whole and sound,

and innocent of a great offense.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my

heart be acceptable in your sight, *

O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

Epistle: James 5:13-20

13 If any of you are having trouble, pray. If you are happy, sing psalms. 14 If you are sick, call for the church leaders. Have them pray for you and anoint you with olive oil in the name of the Lord. 15 (Prayers offered in faith will save those who are sick, and the Lord will cure them.) If you have sinned, you will be forgiven. 16 So admit your sins to each other, and pray for each other so that you will be healed.

Prayers offered by those who have God's approval are effective. 17 Elijah was human like us. Yet, when he prayed that it wouldn't rain, no rain fell on the ground for three-and-a-half years. 18 Then he prayed again. It rained, and the ground produced crops.

19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you wanders from the truth, someone can bring that person back. 20 Realize that whoever brings a sinner back from the error of his ways will save him from death, and many sins will be forgiven.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Mark 9:38-50

38 John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone forcing demons out of a person by using the power and authority of your name. We tried to stop him because he was not one of us."

39 Jesus said, "Don't stop him! No one who works a miracle in my name can turn around and speak evil of me. 40 Whoever isn't against us is for us. 41 I can guarantee this truth: Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward."

42 "These little ones believe in me. It would be best for the person who causes one of them to lose faith to be thrown into the sea with a large stone hung around his neck.

43 “So if your hand causes you to lose your faith, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life disabled than to have two hands and go to hell, to the fire that cannot be put out. 45 If your foot causes you to lose your faith, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. 47 If your eye causes you to lose your faith, tear it out! It is better for you to enter God’s kingdom with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell. 48 In hell worms that eat the body never die, and the fire is never put out. 49 Everyone will be salted with fire. 50 Salt is good. But if salt loses its taste, how will you restore its flavor? Have salt within you, and live in peace with one another.”

The Gospel of the Lord

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.**