

Worship Plan for Sunday, September 24, 2017

Lectionary 25

Proper 20

16th Sunday after Pentecost

ELW Holy Communion Setting One

Sunday, September 24, 2017

Introduction to the day

Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables, in which Jesus says the reign of God is like workers who get paid the same no matter when they start. When God changes his mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Jonah 3:10--4:11

The reading may be announced:

A reading from Jonah.

After Jonah's short sermon in 3:4, the Ninevites all repented and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive: You, Jonah, are all worked up about a bush, but should not I be concerned about a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites who do not know the difference between their right and left hands?

¹⁰When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

^{4:1}But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ²He prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. ³And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” ⁴And the LORD said, “Is it right for you to be angry?” ⁵Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

⁶The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. ⁷But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

⁹But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?” And he said, “Yes, angry enough to die.” ¹⁰Then the LORD said, “You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?”

The reading may be concluded:

Word of God, word of life.

The assembly responds:

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 145:1-8

- ¹ I will exalt you, my | God and king,
and bless your name forev- | er and ever.
- ² **Every day | will I bless you
and praise your name forev- | er and ever.**
- ³ Great is the LORD and greatly | to be praised!
There is no end | to your greatness.
- ⁴ **One generation shall praise your works | to another
and shall de- | clare your power. R**
- ⁵ I will speak of the glorious splendor | of your majesty
and all your | marvelous works.
- ⁶ **They shall tell of the might of your | wondrous acts,
and I will re- | count your greatness.**
- ⁷ They shall publish the remembrance of | your great goodness;
they shall sing joyfully | of your righteousness.
- ⁸ **The LORD is gracious and full | of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love. R**

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:21-30

The reading may be announced:

A reading from Philippians.

Paul writes to the Philippians from prison. Though he is uncertain about the outcome of his imprisonment, he is committed to the ministry of the gospel and calls on the Philippians to live lives that reflect and enhance the gospel mission.

²¹ For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you.

²⁵ Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶ so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

²⁷ Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know

that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel,²⁸ and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing.²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

The reading may be concluded:

Word of God, word of life.

The assembly responds:

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: Matthew 20:1-16

The gospel is announced.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.

[Jesus said to the disciples:]¹ "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.² After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace;⁴ and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same.⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?'⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.'⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.¹⁰ Now when the first came,

they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' ¹³But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

The gospel concludes:

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

Let us pray for the church and its ministry. Unite us in one Spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God who stretched the spangled heavens, we thank and praise you for the gift of the sun, moon, stars, mountains, valleys, grasslands, and deserts.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of great mercy and love, you show faithfulness and kindness to the world every day. Guard those who suffer because of dishonest policies, corrupt government, or unfair labor practices. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God, you provide for all our needs. We pray for those who are homeless, jobless, or hopeless. We pray for those who are forgotten, ignored, or isolated. We pray for all in any need (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our congregation and our neighborhood. Accompany us wherever we are on our journey of faith. Give us joy in the present and hope for the future. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of endings and beginnings, we remember before you all the faithful departed (*especially*). Comfort those who mourn. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting the power of Christ and the gifts of the Spirit.

Amen.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

Copyright © 2017 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.