

Readings September 24, 2023

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Reading: Jonah 3:10--4:11

¹⁰When God saw what the people of Nineveh did, how they turned from their evil ways, God had second thoughts about the calamity that God said would be done to them; and God 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?"

Semicontinuous Psalm: Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45

¹Give thanks to the LORD and call up- | on God's name;
make known the deeds of the LORD a- | mong the peoples.

²**Sing to the | LORD, sing praises,
and speak of all God's | marvelous works.**

³Glory in God's | holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the | LORD rejoice.

⁴**Search for the strength | of the LORD;
continually | seek God's face.**

⁵Remember the marvels | God has done,
the wonders and the judgments | of God's mouth,

⁶**O offspring of Abra- | ham, God's servant,
O children of Jacob, God's | chosen ones. R**

³⁷You led out your people with sil- | ver and gold;
in all their tribes there was not | one that stumbled.

³⁸**Egypt was glad to | see them go,
because they were a- | fraid of them.**

³⁹You spread out a cloud | for a covering
and a fire to give | light by night.

⁴⁰**They asked, and | you brought quail,
and satisfied them with | bread from heaven.**

⁴¹You opened the rock, and | water flowed,
so the river ran in | the dry places.

⁴²**For you remembered your | holy word
and Abra- | ham your servant. R**

⁴³So you led forth your peo- | ple with gladness,
your chosen with | shouts of joy.

⁴⁴**You gave your people the lands | of the nations,
and they took the fruit of | others' toil,**

⁴⁵that they might | keep your statutes
and observe your teachings. | Hallelujah! **R**

Second Reading: Philippians 1:21-30

²¹For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. ²³I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; ²⁴but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

²⁷Only, 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, ²⁸and 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. ²⁹For God has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for Christ as well—³⁰since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

[Jesus said:] ¹"The dominion of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴and 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. ⁶And 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?' ⁷They 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.' ⁹When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰Now 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."