

**Readings for Sunday, September 15,
2024 Seventeenth Sunday after
Pentecost First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a**

⁴The Lord God has given me
the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.

Morning by morning the Lord God wakens—
wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.

⁵The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.

⁶I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.

⁷The Lord God helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
⁸the one who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.

^{9a}It is the Lord God who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?

Psalm: Psalm 116:1-9

I will walk in the presence of the Lord. (Ps. 116:9)

¹I love the Lord, who has ^l heard my voice,
and listened to my ^l supplication,

²**for the Lord has given ^l ear to me
whenev- ^l er I called.**

³The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave ^l came upon me;
I came to ^l grief and sorrow.

⁴**Then I called upon the name ^l of the Lord:
“O Lord, I pray you, ^l save my life.” R**

⁵Gracious is the ^l Lord and righteous;
our God is full ^l of compassion.

⁶**The Lord watches o- ^l ver the innocent;
I was brought low, ^l and God saved me.**

⁷Turn again to your rest, ^l O my soul.
for the Lord has dealt ^l well with you.

⁸**For you have rescued my ^l life from death,
my eyes from tears, and my ^l feet from stumbling;**

⁹I will walk in the presence ^l of the Lord
in the land ^l of the living. **R**

Second Reading: James 3:1-12

This text uses various images to illustrate how damaging and hurtful the way we speak to and about others can be. Not only are we to control our speech, but what we say and how we say it are to reflect our faith.

¹Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ²For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. ³If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. ⁴Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵So also the tongue is a small part of the body, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! ⁶And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our bodily parts as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. ⁷For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, ⁸but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. ¹¹Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? ¹²Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

Gospel: Mark 8:27-38

This story provides the turning point in Mark's gospel. Peter is the first human being in the narrative to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, but he cannot accept that as the Messiah Jesus will have to suffer. Moreover, Jesus issues a strong challenge to all by connecting discipleship and the cross.

²⁷Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." ²⁹Jesus asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." ³⁰And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son-of-Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴Jesus called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son-of-Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."