
September 27, 2020

Pentecost 17
Year A

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalms 78:1-4, 12-16

Philippians 2:1-13

Matthew 21:23-32

**SELECTED READING
AND THEME:**

Matthew 21:23-32

The gracious will of God

CALL TO WORSHIP

Another day has dawned,

and we are bathed in light.

The earth opens up her wonders to us,

and we are blessed to encounter them.

God continues to love us and hold us in grace.

We know we are family and welcomed here.

Let us worship together.

Yes. Let us worship God.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Ever-present God,

we come here today to learn a bit more of

what is your will for us,

for our world and for all of creation.

Open our hearts to your words of life

that we might hear

and open our minds to imagine the deeds

we might do as your Spirit of grace

dwells and grows within us. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us come to God in humble prayer.

Hear our confession today, gracious God,

as we admit we can be so immature in our ways –

lazy;

self-absorbed;

quick to anger;

eager to judge.

We can be self-righteous,

and overly sensitive to criticism.

We like to complain that things aren't fair

and become resentful when those we dislike
or are our adversaries are treated with the same favour
and respect that we are.

We quickly sort our neighbours into categories,
placing some on the A-list

and relegating others to second class.

Some even make the throw-away pile.

Too often we are not very mature, not very grown up,
not very willing to deal with complexity.

Forgive us and guide us we pray
that we might always be faithful followers of Christ.

Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God doesn't shake a finger at us
or throw arms up in despair at our failings.

Instead, God embraces us with grace
and calls us out of our failing into right living.

All we need do is step into that embrace.

We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

God beyond all understanding,
we are glad to be the inheritors
of your story of grace,

living in the communion of saints
that are part of salvation history.

We are grateful to have parables
and poems, prophecy and genealogies
from the beginning of time,

all pointing to your involvement with your people.

They are a legacy of wisdom and a pathway to joy.

So, we will not hide them away.

We will sit down with our children
and tell them tales and the story of the wonders of God.

God of all time,

we rejoice that you intervene in our lives,
and open our eyes to the glory of the earth,

the beauty of community

and the joy of being people of justice and compassion.

All praise be unto your name. Amen.

DISCIPLESHIP THOUGHT

Parents of teenagers may relate to today's parable. It is not unusual to receive a promise that a job will be done, and it not be, or done, but in a time that 'suits me'. It is frustrating, as is the inevitable sense that your ability to change the situation is limited. One can imagine it is this kind of frustration that the chief priests and elders are feeling as Jesus refuses to be accountable to them, disrupts their notions of authority and opens up God's kingdom to people they can by all rights exclude. Like parents constantly trying to understand a teenager's mind, the church is constantly trying to understand what the gospel says to us. With what attitude do we do this? One of grace that liberates us all or one that excludes many and shackles us to rigid legality?

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

We are grateful for all the good things
and blessings we have in our lives
and so we respond by sharing something
of what we have in the giving of our offering today.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

As we give you these gifts of money God,
know they come with our commitment
to be people of your way.
They are gifts of love for you,
to be used in your mission in the world.
May they bring new life and liberation.
Be with us as we work for good. Amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Gracious God,
we would be conscientious followers of your way,
aware we are called to be full
of the spirit of compassion and empathy.
Help us to ensure that what we do
and how we act within our world,
is done, not out of ambition or conceit
but because of our regard for the folk
with whom we share this world.
Deepen our understanding
that there is no benefit to self-interest.
Teach us your ways, so that we may all flourish
when the hand of friendship and camaraderie is
extended wide to everything in heaven and earth.
We know what it looks like when we do your will.
So make us good neighbours, peacemakers,
joy bringers and hope bearers.

May we be people who willingly
get our hands dirty restoring the earth.
Open our hearts to welcome the refugee,
the widow and the orphan.
May we build bridges
and breakdown the walls of prejudice and bias.
May we release the chains of those
who are locked in oppressive lives.
May we sit alongside the lonely
and reach out to those who find it hard
to negotiate a fruitful life. Amen.

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

We have experienced the grace of God
as a liberating power in our own lives.
As we go from here,
we go to be people who impart
that liberating grace to the world.

May God's Word be upon our lips;
Christ's way be the path we tread
and the Holy Spirit's breath give us life.
This day and always. Amen.

HYMNS

Exodus 17: 1-7

All my hope on God is founded
Guide me, O my great Redeemer
Our God, our help in ages past
Rock of Ages, cleft for me

TiS.560 AHB.465
TiS.569 AHB.478
TiS.47 AHB.46
TiS.222 AHB.157

Psalms 78: 1-4, 12-16

Give ear, my people, to my teaching

TiS.41

Philippians 2: 1-1

All praise to thee, for thou, O King divine
And can it be, that I should gain
At the name of Jesus
From heaven you came, helpless babe
May the mind of Christ my Saviour
O Lord my God, when I, in awesome wonder
Thou didst leave thy throne

AHB.180
TiS.209 AHB.138
TiS.231 AHB.170
TiS.256 AT Everybody.261
TiS.609 AHB.537
TiS.155
AHB.206

Matthew 21: 23-32

Crown him with many crowns
I danced in the morning
Rejoice, the Lord is King
Seek ye first the kingdom of God
When we walk with the Lord

TiS.228 AHB.163
TiS.242 AHB.183
TiS.216 AHB.147
TiS.745 SA.75
AHB.531