

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SEPTEMBER 24, 2017



THE LESSON Exodus 16:2-15

²The whole Israelite community complained against Moses and Aaron in the desert. ³The Israelites said to them, "Oh, how we wish that the LORD had just put us to death while we were still in the land of Egypt. There we could sit by the pots cooking meat and eat our fill of bread. Instead, you've brought us out into this desert to starve this whole assembly to death."

⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, "I'm going to make bread rain down from the sky for you. The people will go out each day and gather just enough for that day. In this way, I'll test them to see whether or not they follow my Instruction. ⁵On the sixth day, when they measure out what they have collected, it will be twice as much as they collected on other days." ⁶So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "This evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt. ⁷And in the morning you will see the LORD's glorious presence, because your complaints against the Lord have been heard. Who are we? Why blame us?" ⁸Moses continued, "The LORD will give you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread

in the morning because the LORD heard the complaints you made against him. Who are we? Your complaints aren't against us but against the LORD."

⁹Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole Israelite community, 'Come near to the LORD, because he's heard your complaints.'" ¹⁰As Aaron spoke to the whole Israelite community, they turned to look toward the desert, and just then the glorious presence of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

¹¹The LORD spoke to Moses, ¹²"I've heard the complaints of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat. And in the morning you will have your fill of bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.'"

¹³In the evening a flock of quail flew down and covered the camp. And in the morning there was a layer of dew all around the camp. ¹⁴When the layer of dew lifted, there on the desert surface were thin flakes, as thin as frost on the ground. ¹⁵When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?" They didn't know what it was.

Moses said to them, "This is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat."

THE RESPONSE Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45

¹Give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make his deeds known to all people!

²Sing to God; sing praises to the Lord; dwell on all his wondrous works!

³Give praise to God's holy name! Let the hearts rejoice of all those seeking the LORD!

⁴Pursue the LORD and his strength; seek his face always!

⁵Remember the wondrous works he has done, all his marvelous works, and the justice he declared—

⁶you who are the offspring of Abraham, his servant, and the children of Jacob, his chosen ones. . . .

³⁷Then God brought Israel out, filled with silver and gold; not one of its tribes stumbled.

³⁸Egypt celebrated when they left, because the dread of Israel had come upon them.

³⁹God spread out clouds as a covering; gave lightning to provide light at night.

⁴⁰The people asked, and God brought quail; God filled them full with food from heaven.

⁴¹God opened the rock and out gushed water—flowing like a river through the desert!

⁴²Because God remembered his holy promise to Abraham his servant,

⁴³God brought his people out with rejoicing, his chosen ones with songs of joy.

⁴⁴God gave them the lands of other nations; they inherited the wealth of many peoples—

⁴⁵all so that they would keep his laws and observe his instructions.

Praise the LORD!

THE EPISTLE Philippians 1:21-30

²¹Because for me, living serves Christ and dying is even better. ²²If I continue to live in this world, I get results from my work. ²³But I don't know what I prefer. I'm torn between the two because I want to leave this life and be with Christ, which is far better. ²⁴However, it's more important for me to stay in

this world for your sake. ²⁵I'm sure of this: I will stay alive and remain with all of you to help your progress and the joy of your faith, ²⁶and to increase your pride in Christ Jesus through my presence when I visit you again.

²⁷Most important, live together in a manner worthy of Christ's gospel. Do this, whether I come and see you or I'm absent and hear about you. Do this so that you stand firm,

united in one spirit and mind as you struggle together to remain faithful to the gospel. ²⁸That way, you won't be afraid of anything your enemies do. Your faithfulness and courage are a sign of their coming destruction and your salvation, which is

from God. ²⁹God has generously granted you the privilege, not only of believing in Christ but also of suffering for Christ's sake. ³⁰You are having the same struggle that you saw me face and now hear that I'm still facing.

THE GOSPEL Matthew 20:1-16

¹"The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ²After he agreed with the workers to pay them a denarion, he sent them into his vineyard.

³"Then he went out around nine in the morning and saw others standing around the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I'll pay you whatever is right.' ⁵And they went.

"Again around noon and then at three in the afternoon, he did the same thing. ⁶Around five in the afternoon he went and found others standing around, and he said to them, 'Why are you just standing around here doing nothing all day long?'

⁷"'Because nobody has hired us,' they replied.

"He responded, 'You also go into the vineyard.'

⁸"When evening came, the owner

of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the workers and give them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and moving on finally to the first.' ⁹When those who were hired at five in the afternoon came, each one received a denarion. ¹⁰Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But each of them also received a denarion. ¹¹When they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²'These who were hired last worked one hour, and they received the same pay as we did even though we had to work the whole day in the hot sun.'

¹³"But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I did you no wrong. Didn't I agree to pay you a denarion? ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go. I want to give to this one who was hired last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Don't I have the right to do what I want with what belongs to me? Or are you resentful because I'm generous?' ¹⁶So those who are last will be first. And those who are first will be last."