

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OCTOBER 1, 2017



THE LESSON Exodus 17:1-7

¹The whole Israelite community broke camp and set out from the Sin desert to continue their journey, as the LORD commanded. They set up their camp at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ²The people argued with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses said to them, "Why are you arguing with me? Why are you testing the LORD?"

³But the people were very thirsty for water there, and they complained to Moses, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to kill us, our children, and our livestock with thirst?"

⁴So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What should I do with this people? They are getting ready to stone me."

⁵The LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of Israel's elders with you. Take in your hand the shepherd's rod that you used to strike the Nile River, and go. ⁶I'll be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Hit the rock. Water will come out of it, and the people will be able to drink." Moses did so while Israel's elders watched. ⁷He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites argued with and tested the LORD, asking, "Is the LORD really with us or not?"

THE RESPONSE Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16

¹Listen, my people, to my teaching; tilt your ears toward the words of my mouth.

²**I will open my mouth with a proverb. I'll declare riddles from days long gone—³ones that we've heard and learned about, ones that our ancestors told us.**

⁴We won't hide them from their descendants; we'll tell the next generation all about the praise due the LORD and his strength—the wondrous works God has done. . . .

¹²**But God performed wonders in their ancestors' presence—in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.**

¹³God split the sea and led them through, making the waters stand up like a wall.

¹⁴**God led them with the cloud by day; by the lightning all through the night.**

¹⁵God split rocks open in the wilderness, gave them plenty to drink—as if from the deep itself!

¹⁶God made streams flow from the rock, made water run like rivers.

THE EPISTLE Philippians 2:1-13

¹Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort in love, any sharing in the Spirit, any sympathy, ²complete my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, being united, and agreeing with each other. ³Don't do anything for selfish purposes, but with humility think of others as better than yourselves. ⁴Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others. ⁵Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus:

⁶Though he was in the form of God, he did not consider being equal with God something to exploit.

⁷But he emptied himself by taking the form of a slave and by becoming like human beings.

When he found himself in the

form of a human,

⁸he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore, God highly honored him

and gave him a name above all names,

¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus everyone

in heaven, on earth, and under the earth might bow

¹¹and every tongue confess that

Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my loved ones, just as you always obey me, not just when I am present but now even more while I am away, carry out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

¹³God is the one who enables you both to want and to actually live out his good purposes.

THE GOSPEL Matthew 21:23-32

²³When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came to him as he was teaching. They asked, "What kind of authority do you have for doing these things? Who gave you this authority?"

²⁴Jesus replied, "I have a question for you. If you tell me the answer, I'll tell you what kind of authority I have to do these things. ²⁵Where did John get his authority to baptize?

Did he get it from heaven or from humans?"

They argued among themselves, "If we say 'from heaven,' he'll say to us, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' ²⁶But we can't say 'from humans' because we're afraid of the crowd, since everyone thinks John was a prophet." ²⁷Then they replied, "We don't know."

Jesus also said to them, "Neither will I tell you what kind of authority I have to do these things.

²⁸"What do you think? A man had

two sons. Now he came to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.'

²⁹"No, I don't want to,' he replied. But later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰"The father said the same thing to the other son, who replied, 'Yes, sir.' But he didn't go.

³¹"Which one of these two did his father's will?"

They said, "The first one."

Jesus said to them, "I assure you that tax collectors and prostitutes are entering God's kingdom ahead of you. ³²For John came to you on the righteous road, and you didn't believe him. But tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. Yet even after you saw this, you didn't change your hearts and lives and you didn't believe him."