

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OCTOBER 8, 2017



THE LESSON Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

¹Then God spoke all these words:

²I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

³You must have no other gods before me.

⁴Do not make an idol for yourself—no form whatsoever—of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. . . .

⁷Do not use the LORD your God's name as if it were of no significance; the LORD won't forgive anyone who uses his name that way.

⁸Remember the Sabbath day and treat it as holy. ⁹Six days you may work and do all your tasks, . . .

¹²Honor your father and your mother so that your life will be long on the fertile land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³Do not kill.

¹⁴Do not commit adultery.

¹⁵Do not steal.

¹⁶Do not testify falsely against your neighbor.

¹⁷Do not desire your neighbor's house. Do not desire and try to take your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox, donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.

¹⁸When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the horn, and the mountain smoking, the people shook with fear and stood at a distance. ¹⁹They said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we'll listen. But don't let God speak to us, or we'll die."

²⁰Moses said to the people, "Don't be afraid, because God has come only to test you and to make sure you are always in awe of God so that you don't sin."

THE RESPONSE Psalm 19

¹Heaven is declaring God's glory; the sky is proclaiming his handiwork.

²**One day gushes the news to the next, and one night informs another what needs to be known.**

³Of course, there's no speech, no words—their voices can't be heard—

⁴**but their sound extends throughout the world; their words reach the ends of the earth. God has made a tent in heaven for the sun.**

⁵The sun is like a groom coming out of his honeymoon suite; like a warrior, it thrills at running its course.

⁶**It rises in one end of the sky; its circuit is complete at the other. Nothing escapes its heat.**

⁷The LORD's instruction is perfect, reviving one's very being. The LORD's laws are faithful, making naive people wise.

⁸The LORD's regulations are right, gladdening the heart. The LORD's commands are pure, giving light to the eyes.

⁹Honoring the LORD is correct, lasting forever. The LORD's judgments are true. All of these are righteous!

¹⁰They are more desirable than gold—than tons of pure gold! They are sweeter than honey—even dripping off the honeycomb!

¹¹No doubt about it: your servant is enlightened by them; there is great reward in keeping them.

¹²But can anyone know what they've accidentally done wrong? Clear me of any unknown sin

¹³and save your servant from willful sins. Don't let them rule me. Then I'll be completely blameless; I'll be innocent of great wrongdoing.

¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing to you, LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

THE EPISTLE Philippians 3:4b-14

^{4b}If anyone else has reason to put their confidence in physical advantages, I have even more:

⁵I was circumcised on the eighth day.

I am from the people of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin.

I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

With respect to observing the Law, I'm a Pharisee.

⁶With respect to devotion to the faith, I harassed the church.

With respect to righteousness under the Law, I'm blameless.

⁷These things were my assets, but I wrote them off as a loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸But even beyond that, I consider everything a loss in comparison with the superior value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have lost everything for him, but what I lost I think of as sewer trash, so that I might gain Christ ⁹and be found in

him. In Christ I have a righteousness that is not my own and that does not come from the Law but rather from the faithfulness of Christ. It is the righteousness of God that is based on faith. ¹⁰The righteousness that I have comes from knowing Christ, the power of his resurrection, and the participation in his sufferings. It includes being conformed to his death ¹¹so that I may perhaps reach the goal of the resurrection of the dead.

¹²It's not that I have already reached this goal or have already been perfected, but I pursue it, so that I may grab hold of it because Christ grabbed hold of me for just this purpose. ¹³Brothers and sisters, I myself don't think I've reached it, but I do this one thing: I forget about the things behind me and reach out for the things ahead of me. ¹⁴The goal I pursue is the prize of God's upward call in Christ Jesus.

THE GOSPEL Matthew 21:33-46

^{33a}Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a tower. Then he rented it to tenant farmers and took a trip. ³⁴When it was time for harvest, he sent his servants to the tenant farmers to collect his fruit. ³⁵But the tenant farmers grabbed his servants. They beat some of them, and some of them they killed. Some of them they stoned to death.

^{36a}Again he sent other servants, more than the first group. They treated them in the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

^{38a}But when the tenant farmers saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come on, let's kill him and we'll have his inheritance.' ³⁹They grabbed him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

^{40a}When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenant farmers?"

⁴¹They said, "He will totally destroy those wicked farmers and rent the vineyard to other tenant farmers who will give him the fruit when it's ready."

⁴²Jesus said to them, "Haven't you ever read in the scriptures, *The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. The Lord has done this, and it's amazing in our eyes?* ⁴³Therefore, I tell you that God's kingdom will be taken away from you and will be given to a people who produce its fruit. ⁴⁴Whoever falls on this stone will be crushed. And the stone will crush the person it falls on."

⁴⁵Now when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard the parable, they knew Jesus was talking about them. ⁴⁶They were trying to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, who thought he was a prophet.