

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 2, 2018



THE LESSON

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

⁸Listen! It's my lover: here he comes now, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills.

⁹My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag. Here he stands now, outside our wall, peering through the windows, peeking through the lattices.

¹⁰My lover spoke and said to me,

"Rise up, my dearest, my fairest, and go.

¹¹Here, the winter is past; the rains have come and gone.

¹²Blossoms have appeared in the land; the season of singing has arrived, and the sound of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.

¹³The green fruit is on the fig tree, and the grapevines in bloom are fragrant. Rise up, my dearest, my fairest, and go."

THE RESPONSE Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9

A marvelous word has stirred my heart as I mention my works to the king. My tongue is the pen of a skillful scribe.

You are the most handsome of men; grace has been poured out on your lips. No wonder God has blessed you forever! . . .

Your divine throne is eternal and everlasting.

Your royal scepter is a scepter of justice.

You love righteousness and hate wickedness.

No wonder God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy more than all your companions!

All your clothes have the pleasing scent of myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. The music of stringed instruments coming from ivory palaces entertains you.

The royal princess is standing in your precious jewels; the queen stands at your right, dressed in the gold of Ophir.

THE EPISTLE James 1:17-27

¹⁷Every good gift, every perfect gift, comes from above. These gifts come down from the Father, the

creator of the heavenly lights, in whose character there is no change at all. ¹⁸He chose to give us birth by his true word, and here is the result:

we are like the first crop from the harvest of everything he created.

¹⁹Know this, my dear brothers and sisters: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to grow angry. ²⁰This is because an angry person doesn't produce God's righteousness. ²¹Therefore, with humility, set aside all moral filth and the growth of wickedness, and welcome the word planted deep inside you—the very word that is able to save you.

²²You must be doers of the word and not only hearers who mislead themselves. ²³Those who hear but don't do the word are like those who look at their faces in a mirror. ²⁴They

look at themselves, walk away, and immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵But there are those who study the perfect law, the law of freedom, and continue to do it. They don't listen and then forget, but they put it into practice in their lives. They will be blessed in whatever they do.

²⁶If those who claim devotion to God don't control what they say, they mislead themselves. Their devotion is worthless. ²⁷True devotion, the kind that is pure and faultless before God the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their difficulties and to keep the world from contaminating us.

THE GOSPEL

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

The Pharisees and some legal experts from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus. ²They saw some of his disciples eating food with unclean hands. (They were eating without first ritually purifying their hands through washing. ³The Pharisees and all the Jews don't eat without first washing their hands carefully. This is a way of observing the rules handed down by the elders. ⁴Upon returning from the marketplace, they don't eat without first immersing themselves. They observe many other rules that have been handed down, such as the washing of cups, jugs, pans, and sleeping mats.) ⁵So the Pharisees and legal experts asked Jesus, "Why are your disciples not living according to the rules handed down by the elders but instead eat food with ritually unclean hands?"

⁶He replied, "Isaiah really knew

what he was talking about when he prophesied about you hypocrites. He wrote, *This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me. Their worship of me is empty since they teach instructions that are human words.*

⁷You ignore God's commandment while holding on to rules created by humans and handed down to you. . . .

⁸Then Jesus called the crowd again and said, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ⁹Nothing outside of a person can enter and contaminate a person in God's sight; rather, the things that come out of a person contaminate the person. . . .

¹⁰It's from the inside, from the human heart, that evil thoughts come: sexual sins, thefts, murders, ¹¹adultery, greed, evil actions, deceit, unrestrained immorality, envy, insults, arrogance, and foolishness. ¹²All these evil things come from the inside and contaminate a person in God's sight."

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