

## FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 9, 2018



### THE LESSON

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

A good reputation is better than much wealth; high esteem is better than silver and gold. The rich and the poor have this in common: the LORD made them both. . . .

Those who sow injustice will

harvest evil; the rod of their fury will come to an end. Happy are generous people, because they give some of their food to the poor. . . .

Don't steal from the poor, because they are poor. Don't oppress the needy in the gate. The LORD will take up their case and press the life out of those who oppress them.

### THE RESPONSE Psalm 125

The people who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion: never shaken, lasting forever.

Mountains surround Jerusalem. That's how the LORD surrounds his people from now until forever from now!

The wicked rod won't remain in the land given to the righteous so that they don't use their hands to do anything wrong.

LORD, do good to people who are good, to people whose hearts are right.

But as for those people who turn to their own twisted ways—may the LORD march them off with other evildoers!

Peace be on Israel!

### THE EPISTLE

James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17

My brothers and sisters, when you show favoritism you deny the faithfulness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been resurrected in glory. Imagine two people coming into your meeting. One has a gold ring and fine clothes, while the other is poor, dressed in filthy rags. Then suppose that you were to take special notice of the one wearing fine clothes, saying, "Here's an excellent place. Sit here."

But to the poor person you say, "Stand over there"; or, "Here, sit at my feet." Wouldn't you have shown favoritism among yourselves and become evil-minded judges?

My dear brothers and sisters, listen! Hasn't God chosen those who are poor by worldly standards to be rich in terms of faith? Hasn't God chosen the poor as heirs of the kingdom he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Don't the wealthy make life difficult for you? Aren't they the ones

who drag you into court? Aren't they the ones who insult the good name spoken over you at your baptism?

You do well when you really fulfill the royal law found in scripture, *Love your neighbor as yourself.* But when you show favoritism, you are committing a sin, and by that same law you are exposed as a lawbreaker. Anyone who tries to keep all of the Law but fails at one point is guilty of failing to keep all of it. The one who said, *Don't commit adultery*, also said, *Don't commit murder*. So if you don't commit adultery but do commit murder, you are a lawbreaker. In every way, then, speak and act as people who will be judged by the

law of freedom. There will be no mercy in judgment for anyone who hasn't shown mercy. Mercy overrules judgment.

My brothers and sisters, what good is it if people say they have faith but do nothing to show it? Claiming to have faith can't save anyone, can it? Imagine a brother or sister who is naked and never has enough food to eat. What if one of you said, "Go in peace! Stay warm! Have a nice meal!"? What good is it if you don't actually give them what their body needs? In the same way, faith is dead when it doesn't result in faithful activity.

### THE GOSPEL Mark 7:24-37

Jesus left that place and went into the region of Tyre. He didn't want anyone to know that he had entered a house, but he couldn't hide. In fact, a woman whose young daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit heard about him right away. She came and fell at his feet. The woman was Greek, Syrophenician by birth. She begged Jesus to throw the demon out of her daughter. He responded, "The children have to be fed first. It isn't right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

But she answered, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

"Good answer!" he said. "Go on home. The demon has already left your daughter." When she returned to her house, she found the child lying on the bed and the demon gone.

After leaving the region of Tyre, Jesus went through Sidon toward the Galilee Sea through the region of the Ten Cities. Some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly speak, and they begged him to place his hand on the man for healing. Jesus took him away from the crowd by himself and put his fingers in the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. Looking into heaven, Jesus sighed deeply and said, "Ephphatha," which means, "Open up." At once, his ears opened, his twisted tongue was released, and he began to speak clearly.

Jesus gave the people strict orders not to tell anyone. But the more he tried to silence them, the more eagerly they shared the news. People were overcome with wonder, saying, "He does everything well! He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who can't speak."

Scripture quotations are taken from the Common English Bible, copyright © 2011. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Word & Image Lecternary Service Abingdon Press Litho in U.S.A. 9182