

Sunday, September 23, 2007  
Lectionary 25  
Proper 20  
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

## INTRODUCTION

*Early in the academic year may seem a strange time to think about the final exam, but on this day Jesus reminds us that each of us needs to give an accounting of all that is entrusted to us. In the new logic of God's reign, knowing the riches of grace we possess demands resolute action from us; we risk it all for possessing the lavish love of God offered to us.*

## READINGS

Amos 8:4–7  
Psalm 113  
1 Timothy 2:1–7  
Luke 16:1–13

### FIRST READING: Amos 8:4–7

*Amos was called by God to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom for a brief period of time. Peace and prosperity in Israel led to corruption and an increased gap between rich and poor. The prophet declares that God will not tolerate such a situation.*

<sup>4</sup>Hear this, you that trample on the needy,  
and bring to ruin the poor of the land,  
<sup>5</sup>saying, "When will the new moon be over  
so that we may sell grain;  
and the sabbath,  
so that we may offer wheat for sale?  
We will make the ephah small and the shekel great,  
and practice deceit with false balances,  
<sup>6</sup>buying the poor for silver  
and the needy for a pair of sandals,  
and selling the sweepings of the wheat."  
<sup>7</sup>The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:  
Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.\

### PSALM (ELW): Psalm 113

*The LORD lifts up the poor from the ashes. (Ps. 113:7)*

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Give praise, you servants <sup>1</sup>of the LORD;  
praise the name <sup>1</sup>of the LORD.  
<sup>2</sup>**Let the name of the <sup>1</sup>LORD be blessed,  
from this time forth for- <sup>1</sup>evermore.**  
<sup>3</sup>From the rising of the sun to its <sup>1</sup>going down  
let the name of the <sup>1</sup>LORD be praised.  
<sup>4</sup>**The LORD is high a- <sup>1</sup>bove all nations,  
God's glory a- <sup>1</sup>bove the heavens. R**  
<sup>5</sup>Who is like the <sup>1</sup>LORD our God,  
who sits en- <sup>1</sup>throned on high,  
<sup>6</sup>**but stoops <sup>1</sup>to behold**

**the heavens<sup>1</sup> and the earth?**  
<sup>7</sup>The LORD takes up the weak out<sup>1</sup> of the dust  
and lifts up the poor<sup>1</sup> from the ashes,  
**<sup>8</sup>enthroning them<sup>1</sup> with the rulers,  
with the rulers<sup>1</sup> of the people.**  
<sup>9</sup>The LORD makes the woman of a<sup>1</sup> childless house  
to be a joyful mother of children.<sup>1</sup> Hallelujah! **R**

## **SECOND READING: 1 Timothy 2:1–7**

*The pastoral epistles offer insight into how early Christians understood many practical matters, such as church administration and worship. Here, we learn that primary significance was attached to prayer, especially prayer for the government and for all in authority.*

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone,  
<sup>2</sup>for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. <sup>3</sup>This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup>For  
there is one God;  
there is also one mediator between God and humankind,  
Christ Jesus, himself human,  
<sup>6</sup>who gave himself a ransom for all —  
this was attested at the right time. <sup>7</sup>For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

## **GOSPEL: Luke 16:1–13**

*Jesus tells the story of a dishonest man who cheats his employer and then is commended by him for having acted so shrewdly. Even so, he reminds his disciples, "You cannot serve God and wealth."*

Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. <sup>2</sup>So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.' <sup>3</sup>Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup>I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' <sup>5</sup>So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' <sup>6</sup>He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' <sup>7</sup>Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.' <sup>8</sup>And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. <sup>9</sup>And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

<sup>10</sup>Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. <sup>11</sup>If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? <sup>12</sup>And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? <sup>13</sup>No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Let us pray for the life of the world, the intentions of all the faithful, and for any in sorrow or need.

*A brief silence.*

We pray for the church everywhere on the earth, that the unity of all God's people might be our hope and our delight. Help us to mend all breaks and heal all wounds. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for our island home, the earth—her seas, lands, and ancient hills—that we and all who love this world might be forever vigilant in care and trust. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who serve the law—lawyers, judges, police officers, and others—that the common good be fostered with justice and equity for all. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for the lonely and the bereaved, for the sick and the dying (*especially*), and for the homeless and the war-torn; help us to be your hands and your heart. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for this and every congregation of the church, that leaders in all forms of ministry be raised up and empowered to be servants of the gospel. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

In thanksgiving we remember those who have died (*especially*), and we pray for the day when we shall stand face to face at the feast that has no end, at the table of the Lamb. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, eternal God, we offer our prayers, trusting your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

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