

Sunday, September 30, 2007
Lectionary 26
Proper 21
Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

INTRODUCTION

The readings for this day continue the theme of the past several weeks, asking God's people to consider their relationship to wealth. Our money can be a powerful tool for alleviating suffering in the world, but it can just as easily become a strong force that alienates us from the riches of God's love. We need to know where we place our deepest values.

On this day in 420, the great biblical scholar and translator Jerome died. He was largely responsible for making the riches of Christian texts written in Greek available to Latin readers in the Roman Empire.

READINGS

Amos 6:1a, 4–7
Psalm 146
1 Timothy 6:6–19
Luke 16:19–31

FIRST READING: Amos 6:1a, 4–7

In this reading, Amos condemns the arrogance and indifference of Israel's elitist leadership. The prophet presents God's judgment using mourning language, suggesting that Israel has already died.

^aAlas for those who are at ease in Zion,
and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria, ⁴Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory,
and lounge on their couches,
and eat lambs from the flock,
and calves from the stall;
⁵who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp,
and like David improvise on instruments of music;
⁶who drink wine from bowls,
and anoint themselves with the finest oils,
but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!
⁷Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile,
and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away.\

PSALM (ELW): Psalm 146

The LORD gives justice to those who are oppressed. (Ps. 146:7)

¹Hal- | lelujah!
Praise the LORD, | O my soul!
²**I will praise the LORD as long | as I live;**
I will sing praises to my God while I | have my being.
³Put not your | trust in rulers,
in mortals in whom there | is no help.
⁴**When they breathe their last, they re- | turn to earth,**
and in that day | their thoughts perish. R
⁵Happy are they who have the God of Jacob | for their help,

whose hope is in the ¹LORD their God;
⁶**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that ¹is in them;
 who keeps promis- ¹es forever;**
⁷who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to ¹those who hunger.
 The LORD sets the ¹captives free.
⁸**The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who ¹are bowed down;
 the LORD ¹loves the righteous.**
⁹The LORD cares ¹for the stranger;
 the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way ¹of the wicked.
¹⁰**The LORD shall ¹reign forever,
 your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. ¹Hallelujah! R**

SECOND READING: 1 Timothy 6:6–19

Timothy is reminded of the confession he made at his baptism and of the implications this has for daily life. His priorities will be different from those of people who want to be rich.

⁶Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; ⁷for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; ⁸but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. ⁹But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

¹¹But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which he will bring about at the right time — he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. ¹⁶It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

¹⁷As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, ¹⁹thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

GOSPEL: Luke 16:19–31

When Jesus taught that no one can serve both God and wealth, some of his hearers mocked him. He responded with the story of the rich man and Lazarus.

¹⁹There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. ²²The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' ²⁵But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. ²⁶Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' ²⁷He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house — ²⁸for I have five brothers — that he

may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' ²⁹Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' ³⁰He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

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, as we give thanks for the gift of the holy scriptures, and especially for Jerome, who translated the Bible into the common tongue. Fill us with praise and wonder as we read sacred stories and listen for your eternal word. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for the earth, that we may share of its bounty, mindful of the poor who are hungry at the gate. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for peace in our time and for trust among nations, for calm along borders and for justice through treaties. Help us to live in unity. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for all who tend the sick and the dying, for all who research treatment and cures, and for all who refresh those living with depression and physical limitations. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for this community of faith, that we might live the gospel with imagination and boldness. 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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