

# Sunday, September 19, 2021

## Lectionary 25, Year B

### Introduction

Today we hear James warn against selfish ambition, while the disciples quarrel over which one of them is the greatest. Jesus tells them the way to be great is to serve. Then, to make it concrete, he puts in front of them a flesh-and-blood child. We are called to welcome the children God puts in front of us, to make room for them in daily interaction, and to give them a place of honor in the assembly.

### Confession and Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,  
whose teaching is life,  
whose presence is sure,  
and whose love is endless.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God our comforter:

**like lost sheep, we have gone astray.**

**We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity.**

**We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression.**

**We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed.**

**Free us from our sin, gracious God.**

**Listen when we call out to you for help.**

**Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves.**

**Amen.**

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

By the gift of grace in ✠ Christ Jesus, God makes you righteous.

Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins.

**Amen.**

### Prayer of the Day

O God, our teacher and guide, you draw us to yourself and welcome us as beloved children. Help us to lay aside all envy and selfish ambition, that we may walk in your ways of wisdom and understanding as servants of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### Gospel Acclamation

*Alleluia.* God has called us through the proclamation of<sup>†</sup> the good news,\* that we may obtain the glory of our Lord<sup>†</sup> Jesus Christ. *Alleluia.* (2 Thess. 2:14)

## Readings and Psalm

### [Jeremiah 11:18-20](#)

*The prophet led like a lamb to slaughter*

### [Wisdom 1:16--2:1, 12-22](#) (alternate)

*The righteous shall live*

### [Psalm 54](#)

God is my helper; it is the Lord who sustains my life. (Ps. 54:4)

### [James 3:13--4:3, 7-8a](#)

*The wisdom from above*

### [Mark 9:30-37](#)

*Prediction of the passion*

## Semicontinuous First Reading and Psalm

### [Proverbs 31:10-31](#)

*Poem celebrating the capable wife*

### [Psalm 1](#)

They are like trees planted by streams of water. (Ps. 1:3)

## First Reading: Jeremiah 11:18-20

*Today's reading tells of the suffering of the prophet Jeremiah, who announced God's word to Judah but was met with intense opposition and persecution. Jeremiah continues to trust in God in the midst of his suffering.*

<sup>18</sup>It was the LORD who made it known to me, and I knew;  
then you showed me their evil deeds.

<sup>19</sup>But I was like a gentle lamb  
led to the slaughter.

And I did not know it was against me  
that they devised schemes, saying,  
“Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,  
let us cut him off from the land of the living,  
so that his name will no longer be remembered!”

<sup>20</sup>But you, O LORD of hosts, who judge righteously,  
who try the heart and the mind,  
let me see your retribution upon them,  
for to you I have committed my cause.

## First Reading (alternate): Wisdom 1:16--2:1, 12-22

*Dating from shortly before the time of Christ, the Wisdom of Solomon is a piece of Jewish wisdom literature. This reading portrays the ungodly planning the downfall of the righteous person. The ungodly are allied with death, and they do not know that God gives eternal life to the righteous.*

<sup>16</sup>The ungodly by their words and deeds summoned death;  
considering him a friend, they pined away  
and made a covenant with him,  
because they are fit to belong to his company.

<sup>2:1</sup>For they reasoned unsoundly, saying to themselves,  
“Short and sorrowful is our life,  
and there is no remedy when a life comes to its end,  
and no one has been known to return from Hades.

<sup>12</sup>“Let us lie in wait for the righteous man,  
because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions;  
he reproaches us for sins against the law,  
and accuses us of sins against our training.

<sup>13</sup>He professes to have knowledge of God,  
and calls himself a child of the Lord.

<sup>14</sup>He became to us a reproof of our thoughts;

<sup>15</sup>the very sight of him is a burden to us,  
because his manner of life is unlike that of others,  
and his ways are strange.

<sup>16</sup>We are considered by him as something base,  
and he avoids our ways as unclean;  
he calls the last end of the righteous happy,  
and boasts that God is his father.

<sup>17</sup>Let us see if his words are true,  
and let us test what will happen at the end of his life;

<sup>18</sup>for if the righteous man is God’s child, he will help him,  
and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries.

<sup>19</sup>Let us test him with insult and torture,  
so that we may find out how gentle he is,  
and make trial of his forbearance.

<sup>20</sup>Let us condemn him to a shameful death,  
for, according to what he says, he will be protected.”

<sup>21</sup>Thus they reasoned, but they were led astray,  
for their wickedness blinded them,

<sup>22</sup>and they did not know the secret purposes of God,  
nor hoped for the wages of holiness,  
nor discerned the prize for blameless souls.

## **Psalm: Psalm 54**

*God is my helper; it is the Lord who sustains my life. (Ps. 54:4)*

<sup>1</sup>Save me, O God, | by your name;  
in your might, de- | fend my cause.

<sup>2</sup>**Hear my | prayer, O God;  
give ear to the words | of my mouth.**

<sup>3</sup>For strangers have risen up against me, and the ruthless have | sought my life,  
those who have no re- | gard for God.

<sup>4</sup>**Behold, God | is my helper;  
it is the Lord who sus- | tains my life. R**

<sup>5</sup>Render evil to those who | spy on me;  
in your faithful- | ness, destroy them.

<sup>6</sup>**I will offer you a | freewill sacrifice  
and praise your name, O LORD, for | it is good.**

<sup>7</sup>For you have rescued me from | every trouble,  
and my eye looks down | on my enemies. **R**

## **Second Reading: James 3:13--4:3, 7-8a**

*The wisdom God gives unites our hearts and minds. Instead of living to satisfy our own wants and desires, we manifest this wisdom in peace, gentleness, mercy, and impartiality toward others.*

<sup>13</sup>Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. <sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. <sup>15</sup>Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. <sup>16</sup>For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup>And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? <sup>2</sup>You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup>You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. <sup>7</sup>Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8a</sup>Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

## **Gospel: Mark 9:30-37**

*Jesus' teaching and action in this text are directed to the church whenever it is seduced by the world's definition of greatness: prestige, power, influence, and money. The antidote to such a concern for greatness is servanthood.*

<sup>30</sup>[Jesus and the disciples went on] and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it;<sup>31</sup>for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again."<sup>32</sup>But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

<sup>33</sup>Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” <sup>34</sup>But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. <sup>35</sup>He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” <sup>36</sup>Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, <sup>37</sup>“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

### **Semicontinuous First Reading: Proverbs 31:10-31**

*This passage, which ends the book of Proverbs, describes the good wife. She is a supremely capable and hardworking person, who runs the household and also engages in commercial ventures. She cares both for her family and for the poor, and she fears the LORD.*

- <sup>10</sup>A capable wife who can find?  
She is far more precious than jewels.
- <sup>11</sup>The heart of her husband trusts in her,  
and he will have no lack of gain.
- <sup>12</sup>She does him good, and not harm,  
all the days of her life.
- <sup>13</sup>She seeks wool and flax,  
and works with willing hands.
- <sup>14</sup>She is like the ships of the merchant,  
she brings her food from far away.
- <sup>15</sup>She rises while it is still night  
and provides food for her household  
and tasks for her servant-girls.
- <sup>16</sup>She considers a field and buys it;  
with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
- <sup>17</sup>She girds herself with strength,  
and makes her arms strong.
- <sup>18</sup>She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.  
Her lamp does not go out at night.
- <sup>19</sup>She puts her hands to the distaff,  
and her hands hold the spindle.
- <sup>20</sup>She opens her hand to the poor,  
and reaches out her hands to the needy.
- <sup>21</sup>She is not afraid for her household when it snows,  
for all her household are clothed in crimson.
- <sup>22</sup>She makes herself coverings;  
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
- <sup>23</sup>Her husband is known in the city gates,  
taking his seat among the elders of the land.
- <sup>24</sup>She makes linen garments and sells them;  
she supplies the merchant with sashes.
- <sup>25</sup>Strength and dignity are her clothing,  
and she laughs at the time to come.
- <sup>26</sup>She opens her mouth with wisdom,

and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.  
<sup>27</sup>She looks well to the ways of her household,  
and does not eat the bread of idleness.  
<sup>28</sup>Her children rise up and call her happy;  
her husband too, and he praises her:  
<sup>29</sup>“Many women have done excellently,  
but you surpass them all.”  
<sup>30</sup>Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,  
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.  
<sup>31</sup>Give her a share in the fruit of her hands,  
and let her works praise her in the city gates.

## Semicontinuous Psalm: Psalm 1

*They are like trees planted by streams of water. (Ps. 1:3)*

<sup>1</sup>Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel | of the wicked,  
nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats | of the scornful!  
<sup>2</sup>**Their delight is in the law | of the LORD,  
and they meditate on God’s teaching | day and night. R**  
<sup>3</sup>They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that |  
do not wither;  
everything they | do shall prosper.  
<sup>4</sup>**It is not so | with the wicked;  
they are like chaff which the wind | blows away.**  
<sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when | judgment comes,  
nor the sinner in the council | of the righteous.  
<sup>6</sup>**For the LORD knows the way | of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked shall | be destroyed. R**

## Prayers of Intercession

*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.*

Made children and heirs of God’s promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of community, we pray for the church around the world. Unite us in our love for you. Help us overcome our divisions, that we are encouraged to work together for your sake. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

God of creation, we pray for this hurting earth. Awaken in us a new desire to care for this world and empower us to support agencies, organizations, and individual efforts to heal our environment. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

God of cooperation, we pray for nations of the world embroiled in conflict (*especially*). Inspire leaders to listen to each other and work towards peaceful solutions to disagreements. Protect the vulnerable, especially children, who cannot find safety in their home or country. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

God of comfort, we pray for all who live with mental or physical illness. Help them find appropriate care. Bring healing and wholeness when the path forward seems bleak. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

God of compassion, we pray for the young people of this congregation. Renew in us your call to welcome the children in our midst. As they grow, strengthen their faith and our commitment to them. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of consolation, we give you thanks for our loved ones who have died and pray for all who grieve today (*especially*). Shine your grace on all your saints. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Offering Prayer**

God of abundance,  
you cause streams to break forth in the desert  
and manna to rain from the heavens.

Accept the gifts you have first given us.  
Unite them with the offering of our lives  
to nourish the world you love so dearly;  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Invitation to Communion**

All who hunger and thirst, come.  
The table is ready.

## **Prayer after Communion**

Lord of life,  
in the gift of your body and blood  
you turn the crumbs of our faith into a feast of salvation.  
Send us forth into the world with shouts of joy,  
bearing witness to the abundance of your love  
in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Blessing**

People of God,  
you are Christ's body,  
bringing new life to a suffering world.

The holy Trinity, ✝ one God,  
bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **Dismissal**

Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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## **Upcoming Commemorations**

**Nelson Wesley Trout, bishop, died 1996 (TFF)**

**Monday, September 20, 2021**

A native of Ohio, Trout served parishes in several parts of the United States before being elected bishop of the South Pacific District of the American Lutheran Church, the first African American Lutheran to serve in such a capacity.

**Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist**

**Tuesday, September 21, 2021**

Matthew (or Levi) was a tax collector in Capernaum for the Roman government. Tax collectors were frequently despised for dishonesty and for assisting the occupiers. Jesus nevertheless showed love for them, and chose Matthew to be a disciple.

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