



Readings and Reflection
SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2020 – Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

COLLECT

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit
upon your Church in the burning fire of your love:
grant that your people may be fervent
in the fellowship of the gospel
that, always abiding in you,
they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 105 vs 1-6 & 37-45

- 1 O give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name; ♦
make known his deeds among the peoples.
- 2 Sing to him, sing praises, ♦
and tell of all his marvellous works.
- 3 Rejoice in the praise of his holy name; ♦
let the hearts of them rejoice who seek the Lord.
- 4 Seek the Lord and his strength; ♦
seek his face continually.
- 5 Remember the marvels he has done, ♦
his wonders and the judgements of his mouth,
- 6 O seed of Abraham his servant, ♦
O children of Jacob his chosen.

- 37 Then he brought them out with silver and gold; ♦
there was not one among their tribes that stumbled.
- 38 Egypt was glad at their departing, ♦
for a dread of them had fallen upon them.
- 39 He spread out a cloud for a covering ♦
and a fire to light up the night.
- 40 They asked and he brought them quails; ♦
he satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
- 41 He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out ♦
and ran in the dry places like a river.
- 42 For he remembered his holy word ♦
and Abraham, his servant.

43 So he brought forth his people with joy, ♦
his chosen ones with singing.

44 He gave them the lands of the nations ♦
and they took possession of the fruit of their toil,

45 That they might keep his statutes ♦
and faithfully observe his laws.

Alleluia.

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, material from which is included here, is copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2000 and published by Church House Publishing.

Philippians 1.21-end

21 For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. 23 I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. 25 Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, 26 so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

27 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, 28 and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. 29 For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well— 30 since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Matthew 20.1-16

1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; 4 and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went. 5 When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. 6 And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" 7 They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard." 8 When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first." 9 When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. 10 Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. 11 And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, 12 saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." 13 But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did

you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? 14 Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' 16 So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Reflection – this week from Mary-Lou

In our Gospel, Jesus gives us another picture of the Kingdom of God through the world of daily work. This week, I'd like to share with you some words on the passage taken from a reflection by Ken Taylor, in his book *Sunday by Sunday*, and adapted slightly.

"It wouldn't work in a market-place:
the unions would call a strike;
the next day everyone would come at five o'clock
and work one hour for a full day's pay!
You'd be bankrupt in no time:
it's no way to run a business.

But it's not about running a successful business,
it's about the Kingdom of God;
God is like the owner of this imagined vineyard.

The one-hour workers had the same needs as the others:
all needed to make ends meet.
He cared about them, their wives and children;
he understood their needs;
and he loved them – you can't divide love like sharing a cake:
in a family of five, or six or seven,
each child is loved as much as if he or she was the only one.
The Kingdom of God has different values:
the first is last, and the last is first;
the poor have priority – a bias to redress balance;
and there is no sneaking jealousy of those who seem more fortunate.

The Kingdom of God is a family, a community of love.

A church should emulate the Kingdom:
of course it must be run wisely and efficiently, but not to make a profit,
even though they think we're always wanting money!
It is not a business, nor dependent on market forces;
a church is a community of love.

The principle from the parable is very clear:
From each according to their opportunity ...
To each according to their need

In the Kingdom of God
You are given not what you have earned,
nor what you deserve,
But what you need.

It would be terrible if you got what you deserve, but you don't – like the vineyard owner with his workers, the Father is waiting to give you what he sees you really need.

And if you accept what the Father is offering,
you'll be back to work for him tomorrow.”

Thanks be to God!