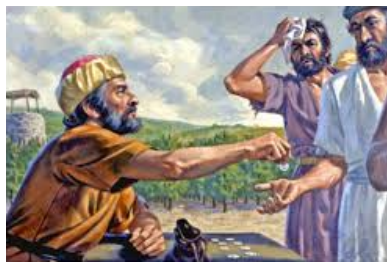


4th Sunday of the month

24th September 2017

Trinity 15 Proper 20 **Green**



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. **Amen**

Exodus 16:2-15 English Standard Version (ESV)

Bread from Heaven

16 ² And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, ³ and the people of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” ⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. ⁵ On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” ⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?” ⁸ And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD.” ⁹ Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, ‘Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.’” ¹⁰ And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the

glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, ¹² “I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’” ¹³ In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. ¹⁴ And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?”^[a] For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.

Footnote: a. or “*It is manna*”; Hebrew *man hu*.

COMMENT: After their miraculous deliverance from slavery in Egypt by crossing of the Red Sea, the Israelites pressed on into the wilderness. When they complained to Moses that they would starve, further evidence of God’s guidance and providence was given in flocks of quails and a flaky substance they called manna (Hebrew for “what is it?”) in plentiful supply for their daily needs (this was probably honey dew).

Matthew 20:1-16 English Standard Version (ESV)

Labourers in the Vineyard

20 ¹ “For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius^[a] a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ ⁵ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. ⁶ And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ ⁸ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ ⁹ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, 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 a denarius?’¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you.¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’^[b]¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first last.”

Footnotes: a. a *denarius* was a day's wage for a labourer. b. or *is your eye bad because I am good?*

COMMENT: This can be a very troublesome parable. It seems so grossly unfair that the last group of labourers were paid the same amount as the first even though they had worked only one hour, not the whole day long, even though the Master had reached an agreement with all concerned. The parable itself highlights this sense of injustice. It can be read in equal comfort by the Communist and the Capitalist. One because perhaps all needed the days pay to survive, and the other because the Employer is free to do with money as he sees fit. This says something about us and where our concerns are – yet the parable is about the Kingdom of Heaven. This is how Jesus introduces it to us. It tells about the absolute sovereignty of God’s love. The currency of the kingdom is grace and eternal life, not coinage. Grace comes to us as the gift of God totally unmerited in spite of all our worthy efforts. That those who come to faith late in the day can receive God’s grace perhaps doesn’t bother us in the same way as what appears to be an injustice in terms of wages. However returning to the money issue, and stepping aside from the message about the Kingdom, historically from the point of view of work and wages for the Galilean peasants, the early workers suffered a gross injustice because of the wealthy landowner’s poor judgment. He tried to get as much work by as few workers as a possible. The parable is open ended, as were many others of Jesus’ parables. They were designed to elicit discussion, not to give pat answers about how things work in this world and how ungenerous the wealthy are.

Psalm 145: 1-8 *Exaltabo te, Deus* Grail Psalter

℟ The Lord is close to all who call him.

¹ *Praise. Of David.*

I will give you glory, O God my king,
I will bless your name for ever. ℟

² I will bless you day after day
and praise your name for ever.

³ The Lord is great, highly to be praised,
his greatness cannot be measured. ℟

⁴ Age to age shall proclaim your works,
shall declare your mighty deeds,
⁵ shall speak of your splendour and glory,
tell the tale of your wonderful works. **R**

⁶ They will speak of your terrible deeds,
recount your greatness and might.

⁷ They will recall your abundant goodness;
age to age shall ring out your justice. **R**

⁸ The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love. **R**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
and to the Holy Spirit**

**As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be:
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: The psalmist praises God for God's gracious and merciful help motivated by steadfast love. It could have been written as an individual's hymn of praise and later transposed for congregational worship in the temple. Like several other psalms it has an acrostic form, each of its stanzas beginning with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. There is one exception for no apparent reason: the letter nun (Eng. = N) was omitted or lost in transmission. It also shows considerable dependence on other psalms as well some Aramaic expressions that would indicate a late date. Its message, however, is simply stated: God is to be praised for God's gracious and providential acts toward all whom God loves.

Post Communion

Keep, O Lord, your Church, with your perpetual mercy; and, because without you our human frailty cannot but fall, keep us ever by your help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, establish, strengthen and settle you in the faith; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**