

READINGS FOR THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

AUGUST 28, 2016

First Lesson

Jeremiah 2:4-13

God, who has been faithful in leading Israel through the wilderness into a good land, calls upon the heavens to witness the incredible foolishness of a people who, under the flawed leadership of priests, rulers, and prophets, willingly abandon God's life-giving water for leaky cisterns.

⁴Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. ⁵Thus says the LORD:

What wrong did your ancestors find in me
that they went far from me,
and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves?

⁶They did not say, "Where is the LORD
who brought us up from the land of Egypt,
who led us in the wilderness,
in a land of deserts and pits,
in a land of drought and deep darkness,
in a land that no one passes through,
where no one lives?"

⁷I brought you into a plentiful land
to eat its fruits and its good things.
But when you entered you defiled my land,
and made my heritage an abomination.

⁸The priests did not say, "Where is the LORD?"
Those who handle the law did not know me;
the rulers transgressed against me;
the prophets prophesied by Baal,
and went after things that do not profit.

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⁹Therefore once more I accuse you,
says the LORD,
and I accuse your children's children.
¹⁰Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look,
send to Kedar and examine with care;
see if there has ever been such a thing.
¹¹Has a nation changed its gods,
even though they are no gods?
But my people have changed their glory
for something that does not profit.
¹²Be appalled, O heavens, at this,
be shocked, be utterly desolate,
says the LORD,
¹³for my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me,
the fountain of living water,
and dug out cisterns for themselves,
cracked cisterns
that can hold no water.

The Word of the Lord.

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Psalm: 81:1, 10-16

Read in unison

¹Sing with joy to God our strength
and raise a loud shout to the God of Jacob.

¹⁰“I am the LORD your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt.
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

¹¹Yet my people did not hear my voice,
and Israel would not obey me.

¹²So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their hearts,
to follow their own devices.

¹³Oh, that my people would listen to me,
that Israel would walk in my ways!

¹⁴I would quickly subdue their enemies
and turn my hand against their foes.

¹⁵Those who hate the LORD would cringe in fear,
and their punishment would last forever.

¹⁶But I would feed you with the finest wheat
and satisfy you with honey from the rock.”

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Second Lesson

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

The conclusion of the letter to the Hebrews contains suggestions for the conduct of a holy life, all of which are shaped by God's love toward us in Jesus Christ.

¹Let mutual love continue. ²Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. ³Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. ⁴Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. ⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." ⁶So we can say with confidence,

"The Lord is my helper;

I will not be afraid.

What can anyone do to me?"

⁷Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ¹⁵Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. ¹⁶Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

The Word of the Lord.

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**Holy Gospel*

Luke 14:1, 7-14

Jesus observes guests jockeying for position at the table. He uses the opportunity to teach his hearers to choose humility rather than self-exaltation. Jesus also makes an appeal for hosts to mimic God's gracious hospitality to the poor and the broken.

¹On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

⁷When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. ⁸“When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; ⁹and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, ‘Give this person your place,’ and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place.

¹⁰But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you.

¹¹For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

¹²He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

The Gospel of the Lord.