

September 24, 2017

A Reading from Exodus (16:2-15)

There in the desert they all complained to Moses and Aaron and said to them, "We wish that the Lord had killed us in Egypt. There we could at least sit down and eat meat and as much other food as we wanted. But you have brought us out into this desert to starve us all to death." The Lord said to Moses, "Now I am going to cause food to rain down from the sky for all of you. The people must go out every day and gather enough for that day. In this way I can test them to find out if they will follow my instructions. On the sixth day they are to bring in twice as much as usual and prepare it." So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "This evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt. In the morning you will see the dazzling light of the Lord's presence. He has heard your complaints against him—yes, against him, because we are only carrying out his instructions." Then Moses said, "It is the Lord who will give you meat to eat in the evening and as much bread as you want in the morning, because he has heard how much you have complained against him. When you complain against us, you are really complaining against the Lord." Moses said to Aaron, "Tell the whole community to come and stand before the Lord, because he has heard their complaints." As Aaron spoke to the whole community, they turned toward the desert, and suddenly the dazzling light of the Lord appeared in a cloud. The Lord said to Moses, "I have heard the complaints of the Israelites. Tell them that at twilight they will have meat to eat, and in the morning they will have all the bread they want. Then they will know that I, the Lord, am their God." In the evening a large flock of quails flew in, enough to cover the camp, and in the morning there was dew all around the camp. When the dew evaporated, there was something thin and flaky on the surface of the desert. It was as delicate as frost. When the Israelites saw it, they didn't know what it was and asked each other, "What is it?" Moses said to them, "This is the food that the Lord has given you to eat.

The Word of the Lord People: ***Thanks be to God***

A Reading from Philippians (1:21-30)

For what is life? To me, it is Christ. Death, then, will bring more. But if by continuing to live I can do more worthwhile work, then I am not sure which I should choose. I am pulled in two directions. I want very much to leave this life and be with Christ, which is a far better thing; but for your sake it is much more important that I remain alive. I am sure of this, and so I know that I will stay. I will stay on with you all, to add to your progress and joy in the faith, so that when I

am with you again, you will have even more reason to be proud of me in your life in union with Christ Jesus. Now, the important thing is that your way of life should be as the gospel of Christ requires, so that, whether or not I am able to go and see you, I will hear that you are standing firm with one common purpose and that with only one desire you are fighting together for the faith of the gospel. Don't be afraid of your enemies; always be courageous, and this will prove to them that they will lose and that you will win, because it is God who gives you the victory. For you have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him. Now you can take part with me in the battle. It is the same battle you saw me fighting in the past, and as you hear, the one I am fighting still. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

The Word of the Lord People: ***Thanks be to God***

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (20:1-16)

People: ***Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.***

"For the Kingdom of Heaven is like the landowner who went out early one morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay the normal daily wage and sent them out to work. "At nine o'clock in the morning he was passing through the marketplace and saw some people standing around doing nothing. So he hired them, telling them he would pay them whatever was right at the end of the day. So they went to work in the vineyard. At noon and again at three o'clock he did the same thing. "At five o'clock that afternoon he was in town again and saw some more people standing around. He asked them, 'Why haven't you been working today?' "They replied, 'Because no one hired us.' "The landowner told them, 'Then go out and join the others in my vineyard.' "That evening he told the foreman to call the workers in and pay them, beginning with the last workers first. When those hired at five o'clock were paid, each received a full day's wage. When those hired first came to get their pay, they assumed they would receive more. But they, too, were paid a day's wage. When they received their pay, they protested to the owner, 'Those people worked only one hour, and yet you've paid them just as much as you paid us who worked all day in the scorching heat.' "He answered one of them, 'Friend, I haven't been unfair! Didn't you agree to work all day for the usual wage? Take your money and go. I wanted to pay this last worker the same as you. Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because I am kind to others?' "So those who are last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last."

The Gospel of Christ People: ***Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.***