

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Proper 21 A

Ezekiel 18:1–4, 25–32

Philippians 2:1–4 (5–13) 14–18

Matthew 21:23–27 (28–32)

The Cross of Christ Opens to Us the Way of Repentance to Life with God

The way of the Lord is righteous and just: *“the soul who sins shall die”* (Ezek. 18:4). However, because the Lord has *“no pleasure in the death of anyone”* (Ezek. 18:32), He calls sinners to repentance and faith in His gracious forgiveness of sins. The man who is thus turned away from his wickedness, who henceforth lives by the grace of God, *“shall surely live; he shall not die”* (Ezek. 18:28). This way of repentance has been opened for us by the Cross of Christ. In the righteousness of faith and love, *“He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death”* (Phil. 2:8), and He was vindicated in His Resurrection from the dead. Indeed, *“God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name”* (Phil. 2:9). He has given us this name in our Baptism into Christ, in whom we now *“shine as lights in the world”* (Phil. 2:15). He uses the authority that He has received from His Father (Matt. 21:23–27) to preach a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, by which even *“the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God”* (Matt. 21:31–32).

Next Week’s Readings from God’s Word:

October 8 Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:7-19 (v.7); Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 21A)

October 1, 2023

INTROIT

Psalm 147:1-5; Antiphon: Psalm 147:6

The LORD lifts up the humble;

he casts the wicked to the ground.

Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God;

for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.

The LORD builds up Jerusalem;

he gathers the outcasts of Israel.

He heals the brokenhearted

and binds up their wounds.

He determines the number of the stars;

he gives to all of them their names.

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;

his understanding is beyond measure.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;**

as it was in the beginning,

is now, and will be forever. Amen.

The LORD lifts up the humble;

he casts the wicked to the ground.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P *Almighty God, You exalted Your Son to the place of all honour and authority, Enlighten our minds by Your Holy Spirit that, confessing Jesus as Lord, we may be led into all truth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,*

C *♪[Amen]♪*

GRADUAL

Psalm 91:11, Psalm 103:1

For he will command his angels concerning you

to guard you in all your ways.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,

and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS

After each petition:

P *Lord, in Your mercy,*

C **hear our prayer.**

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 (ESV)

The word of the LORD came to me: ² “What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’? ³ As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

²⁵ “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? ²⁶ When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. ²⁷ Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. ²⁸ Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?

³⁰ “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.”

Philippians 2:1-18 (ESV)

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or questioning, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the

world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. ¹⁷ Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

Matthew 21:23-32 (ESV)

²³ And when [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’” ²⁶ But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’” ²⁹ And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his

mind and went. ³⁰ And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.