

## The Lessons for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / June 28<sup>th</sup>

### ***Illumination:***

*To place this short reading in context, go back and read the verses just before it. Jeremiah had warned the priests and people that their exile in Babylon would not be ending soon, and that any prophets who say otherwise are liars. Then the young prophet Hananiah stood up and challenged that, prophesying that God had in fact broken the yoke of the Babylonian king and would bring all the exiles home within two years. Now in Sunday's reading we hear Jeremiah respond. He agrees that God will indeed end the exile some day, but only when peace prevails and war, pestilence and famine come to an end.*

### **The First Lesson is from Jeremiah (28:5-9)**

This Sunday we hear the third and final passage from Matthew's long account of Jesus teaching his recently commissioned apostles about the challenges and rewards of discipleship. In recent Gospel readings we have heard Jesus's troubling warnings about how he came not to bring peace but a sword, and that his followers must leave friends and family behind in order to follow him. But now at last Jesus turns his attention to the rewards of following his way. Echoing the Psalmist's assurance that God is loving, just and fair, Jesus promises that those who practice justice in God's name – even in such small ways as offering water to a child – will earn their reward.

### ***Illumination:***

*In these two brief excerpts from a longer Psalm, the Psalmist celebrates God's covenant with King David as a royal lineage that God established to last forever as a sign of God's righteousness and never-ending rule. Those who walk in God's way and rejoice in the divine name will be full of joy, the Psalmist sings, for they know that God is their ruler. The Holy One of Israel is everlasting king.*

**We will read a portion of Psalm 89 (1-4,15-18) responsively by whole verse**

<sup>1</sup> Your love, O Lord, for ever will I sing; \*  
from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.

<sup>2</sup> ***For I am persuaded that your love is established for ever; \*  
you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.***

<sup>3</sup> "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; \*  
I have sworn an oath to David my servant:

<sup>4</sup> ***'I will establish your line for ever, \*  
and preserve your throne for all generations.'***

<sup>15</sup> Happy are the people who know the festal shout! \*  
they walk, O Lord, in the light of your presence.

<sup>16</sup> ***They rejoice daily in your Name; \*  
they are jubilant in your righteousness.***

<sup>17</sup> For you are the glory of their strength, \*  
and by your favor our might is exalted.

<sup>18</sup> ***Truly, the Lord is our ruler; \*  
the Holy One of Israel is our King.***

### ***Illumination:***

*Who would want to be enslaved? It is hard to imagine anyone who would willingly embrace this state, as Paul makes clear by using the idea of enslavement to make a telling point: Our baptism spares us from the enslavement of sin, freeing us to embrace a better way: the joyful enslavement of willing submission to God through Christ. In this way, Paul says, we receive the free gift of grace that brings eternal life.*

A reading from the letter to the Romans (6:12-23)

Do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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### **The Gospel according to Matthew (10:40-42)**

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple-- truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.