

Lessons for The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

August 20, 2017

Psalm 67 ~ A prayer for God's blessing and favor on all the people of the earth, that they might praise him.

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 ~ God gathers exiles of Israel and people from all nations into His covenant of love.

Romans 11:1-2a, 13-15, 28-32 ~ God's gift of grace to Jew and Gentile alike comes freely by His mercy.

Matthew 15:21-28 ~ A Canaanite woman in great need has even greater faith that Jesus will help her.

GATHERING THE TEXTS: A Family from All Nations

A family reflects the oneness God gives to the people He gathers from all nations. Whether they are exiles of Israel or sojourners from other nations, God's love in Christ will gather them into His covenant. St. Paul struggled with the powerful wall between Jew and Gentile which threatened to divide God's people between the call of the covenant and the grace that gathers people from every nation. Jesus carried the message of the Kingdom to the children of Israel, but the family of God spilled beyond borders as his promise of well-ness created faith even among foreigners.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Good and gracious Father, you have made me your child and embraced me with your grace in Jesus Christ. Help me cross borders of jealousy, anger, and fear to be at home with all those your love has claimed. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: Every helping word or deed lights up a needy person's life.

OFFERING PRAYER: All around us, Father, needy neighbors lift their face.
Some are starving bodily because they have no food;
Others, lost and crushed in spirit, hunger for Your grace.
Bless these gifts to meet their needs and share Your gospel news. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: In our pride and self-sufficiency, we turn our backs on God's blessings because they seem so insignificant or because accepting them makes us dependent on God's kindness, but God's gracious love in Jesus embraces us, especially in our dependence, and brings us into the family of his love. Those who know they must depend on God are filled with His grace.