

Lessons for The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost September 27, 2020

Psalm 25:1-10 ~ *The psalmist prays for God's mercy and protection in time of attack by his enemies.*

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 ~ *Justice must be measured by God's righteous ways, not by man's whims.*

Philippians 2:1-4 (5-13) 14-18 ~ *Jesus has been given all authority through His suffering service for our sin.*

Matthew 21:23-27 (28-32) ~ *Jesus' authority comes from God because He completed the will of His Father.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Jesus! Name Above All Names!

The name of Jesus is exalted above all others because He willingly gave up His glory in order to be our servant on the cross and speak God's word of grace in His death and resurrection. In Jesus' day, when chief priests and elders questioned His authority to teach and heal, Jesus stopped them in their tracks with a single question that exposed their motives: Where did John get his authority to baptize? God told His people through Ezekiel that they must bend their sinful lives to His will because justice is measured by God's authority.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Jesus, You are my Lord, my Savior! Just as You took on my servant form, so You died that I may live. As I bow my knee in honor to Your name, so bend my whole life to the authority of Your love. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God's love for us in Christ Jesus calls us to be united in service and support for those who have spiritual and physical needs.

OFFERING PRAYER: We give You our hearts, O Lord, this day
For You have made them Your own
Enlist us in love, O Lord, we pray,
That grace and mercy be shown. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: Confronted by God's authority over us, we blame others for our resistance and rebellion. We refuse to acknowledge God's command like the chief priests, claiming ignorance of the source of Jesus' authority. We let our selfish ambition destroy our relationships with others and prevent us from reaching out to help those who suffer. The result of our denial of God's authority over us is eternal separation from him. Jesus claimed lordship over us by becoming our servant on the cross, dying for our rebellion, and drawing us into eternal fellowship with him that we may be in service to others.

Questions to Consider: Authority is seen in willing service.

- How do we blame others for our lawlessness even in courts of law?
- What is our proper response when we recognize authority over us?
- How do we recognize Jesus' authority over us?
- What can we do to show that we are under Jesus' authority?