

Lessons for the Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 23, 2018

Psalm 54 ~ *David's prayer that God rescue him from his enemies and his confidence in God's deliverance.*

Jeremiah 11:18–20 ~ *When God showed Jeremiah the plots against him, he trusted completely in the Lord.*

James 3:13—4:10 ~ *The wisdom of God has no place for selfishness, but fills us with grace and peace.*

Mark 9:30–37 ~ *Jesus showed the disciples that life is measured by the depth of its service.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Where is the Honor in Being Chosen?

Usually being chosen first is a sign of honor and respect. Jeremiah was chosen to be God's prophet in a tough time. Even his family plotted against him. James explained that once God has chosen us, we must choose lives of peace, mercy, and service. Jesus showed us what it means to be chosen: He is the first to give his life in service. We have also been chosen for service in God's family. What a risk -- and what an honor!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord God, by choosing me through the water of Baptism and the Word of Your Grace, You have laid some difficult choices before me. Give me vision to see those choices clearly and strength to carry them out willingly so that with humility and joy, I may serve others as I serve You. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God has called us to lives of service and has provided us with goods and skills to help others. When we follow Jesus' example we give ourselves in service.

OFFERING PRAYER: Lord Jesus, You have truly said that life is measured best
When every opportunity that puts us to the test
Is met with grace to welcome little ones by word and deed,
And willing hearts to use Your gifts to ease another's need. Amen

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: It is because of our selfish ambition that we quarrel about who is the greatest and justify our desires with unspiritual, demonic wisdom. It was because of that attitude on the part of leaders in Jesus' day and those attitudes in our own hearts today, that Jesus made Himself servant of all, and let Himself be delivered into the hands of men. It is through His sacrificial service that Jesus has rescued us from our own greed and handed us over to God's grace and mercy, that we may live it out in our service to the poor and burdened of this world.