

LESSONS for the Second Sunday after Pentecost**May 29, 2016**

Psalm 96:1-9 ~ *Praise God for His glory and majesty.*

1 Kings 8:22-24, 27-29, 41-43 ~ *Solomon prayed that God's temple be a symbol of His presence and a means of His mercy.*

Galatians 1:1-12 ~ *St. Paul warned that the only saving message is the Gospel of God's grace in Christ Jesus.*

Luke 7:1-10 ~ *Jesus healed the centurion's servant because his master trusted in Jesus to answer his plea.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Worthy or Not, Here He Comes.

We do something if we think it is worth it. We do things for others when we think they deserve it. The grace of God's kingdom comes to us even though we are not worthy! Solomon prayed that foreigners, often considered unworthy, would be able to meet God from the Temple. St. Paul warned the Galatian Christians: any message that makes our acceptance by God depend on approval from others or our efforts to please God is no gospel at all! Although the elders of the Jews urged Jesus, saying the centurion "deserves to have you heal his servant," the officer insisted he did not consider himself worthy to come to Jesus. Still Jesus came to him and answered his prayer.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. Just say the word, and your servant will be healed." Let me show your mercy to my neighbors and to strangers that they may know your name and fear you. Let me whisper your name of grace in Christ Jesus through everything I do. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: The valuable material and magnificent workmanship that went into Solomon's temple were dedicated to representing God for all nations to see His grandeur and steadfast mercy. The centurion did not build a synagogue to curry God's favor, but God used it as well as the temple to showcase His mercies. In Jesus the Christ, God is pleased to dwell on earth and bring His eternal worth to unworthy humanity.

OFFERING PRAYER: O Lord, of all the things we touch on earth,
their time is brief and even so their worth.
But with Your love You touch these gifts we bring
to make them gems that of Your mercies sing. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: We make everything a question of value or worth, often withholding deeds of kindness from neighbors who don't meet our criteria. Solomon knew the temple he had built was not worthy of the Lord God's presence, but he was bold to pray that even foreigners would be able to encounter God from that place of worship. Amazingly, God has chosen to dwell on earth, not only in Solomon's temple, but even in the 'tabernacle' of Jesus himself. Although the centurion knew he was not worthy of Jesus' presence, he was bold to pray for the healing of his servant. The prayer of that foreigner was heard and answered. St Paul explained that we do not receive God's mercies because we deserve them, but because Jesus gave himself to deliver us from the evils of this age.