

Lessons for Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

July 17, 2016

Psalm 27:(1-)-7-14 (*antiphon 4*) ~ *A prayer for God's merciful answer and expression of confidence in his goodness.*

Genesis 18:1-10a (10b-14) ~ *Abraham quickly served the Lord a meal, but God provided a son for Sarah.*

Colossians 1:21-29 ~ *Jesus served us by His reconciling death so now Christ in us may share that good news.*

Luke 10:38-42 ~ *Martha busied herself serving Jesus a meal, but Mary accepted the service of Jesus' word.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: It is in Serving that we are Served.

Martha opened her home to Jesus and was determined to be the very best hostess, but Jesus hosted Mary in a new, redeeming relationship and invited Martha to join him also. In showing kindness to three divine visitors, Abraham received God and learned that Sarah would bear his son, Isaac. We may invite our Lord Jesus to "come, be our guest," but the fact of his grace remains: Jesus came to serve us by his reconciling death, giving us eternal life when we were dead in sin.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord God, I often overlook many details in my relationships with friends and loved ones. Forgive my failures and give me strength that I may serve them better. Thank you for accepting me in Jesus Christ, as I am and for whom I am, rather than for the busy-ness of my service for you and to others. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God has put great resources at our disposal so that we may proclaim the hope of glory He has secured for us through Jesus Christ. We serve this mission of the Church because we have been served with Christ's gift of eternal life.

OFFERING PRAYER: Thank You, Lord, for honest service, works we all can do for You,
Deeds that tell the hope within us, and declare Your promise, too.
Guard us from trite tasks, and duties crowding into holy space.
Bless these gifts; bless us for service, as we share Your Kingdom grace. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: Our busy-ness at serving distracts us from the purpose of our service. We lose sight of our hope in the promise of God's reconciling grace when we see our efforts as means to an end. Rather they are the outflow of a confidence that is based on God's promise to make us stewards of the hope of glory secured by Christ's sufferings which have presented us holy and blameless to God the Father.