

**Lessons for Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

*August 28, 2016*

Psalm 131 (*antiphon: v. 2*) ~ *A humble song of hope that is placed in the Lord, not in proud power and might.*

Proverbs 25:2-10 ~ *From honor in a king's presence to power in court, mercy is better than justice.*

Hebrews 13:1-17 ~ *Jesus has made us holy through His blood so we can afford to help those in need.*

Luke 14:1-14 ~ *Those who feel uncomfortable without clear rules also expect to gain respect by association.*

**GATHERING THE TEXTS:** Let Brotherly Love Continue

King Solomon knew his job: to search out matters and make decisions based on truth and justice; but he also recognized that in our relations with God, we do better to rely on His mercy. We ought also deal with others in love and respect, rather than trying to gain prestige and power at their expense. We can “go outside the camp” and bear the reproach of the world as we reach out to those who are without honor and value in society. Jesus said the rule that applies when the welfare of a child of God is at risk is to extend mercy and honor doesn't come from avoiding the dishonored.

**PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE:** Dear Lord Jesus, You stepped outside the walls to sacrifice Your life's blood to make me worthy in God's sight. Give me the courage and conviction to step to the side of those whose worth is little in the eyes of the world, that I may share the honor of Your love with them. Amen.

**STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT:** Our worth does not consist of honor and prestige in the world's eyes, nor even of impressive accumulations or precious commodities of exchange. Rather we are worthy in God's sight and holy through Jesus' sacrifice. Those who are the least in society are still precious to God. We can afford to risk our position and our goods to care for those God cares for.

**OFFERING PRAYER:** Lord, free us from the love of money; give  
Us grace to share Your love with those in need.  
For You have rescued us from death to live  
With You, outside the gates, in word and deed. Amen.

**CONVICTION AND COMFORT:** When we feel insecure, we look for clear-cut rules to guide our actions and define our relationships. We look for self-worth in our abilities and connections. We imagine that we, rather than God, define our place in life and determine our value. The good news is that God does indeed define our place and determine our worth, and He has done so based on His love for us, not our compliance with rules and our love of honor. Christ's blood has made us holy in God's sight so that we can afford to risk prestige and worth by reaching out to help those who have little or none of either in the eyes of the world.