



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18–24

TIME AFTER PENTECOST — LECTIONARY 25

FIRST READING: Amos 8:4-7

A reading from Amos.

⁴Hear this, you that trample on the needy,
and bring to ruin the poor of the land,
⁵saying, “When will the new moon be over
so that we may sell grain;
and the sabbath,
so that we may offer wheat for sale?
We will make the ephah small and the shekel great,
and practice deceit with false balances,
⁶buying the poor for silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals,
and selling the sweepings of the wheat.”

⁷The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

The word of the Lord. *or* Word of God, word of life.

PSALMODY: Psalm 113

SECOND READING: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

A reading from First Timothy.

¹First of all, then, I urge
that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings
be made for everyone,
²for kings and all who are in high positions,
so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity.
³This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
⁴who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

FIRST READING *ephah = EE-fuh*

The message of the prophet, his warning, is in verse 7. Verses 4-6 describe the people whom the prophet is addressing—those who scheme to cheat and take advantage of the poor; those with no regard for God’s holy day or any of God’s commandments. Anger and “fair warning” are the tones for which the lector wants to be looking.

SECOND READING

The appeal of the author of the letter is twofold: first, that we pray for one another; second, that the hearer be reminded that it is Christ Jesus who hears our prayers and intercedes for us before God. “Quiet urgency” is a tone appropriate to the author’s words.

⁵For
there is one God;
there is also one mediator between God and humankind,
Christ Jesus, himself human,
⁶who gave himself a ransom for all
—this was attested at the right time.
⁷For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle
(I am telling the truth, I am not lying),
a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

The word of the Lord. *or* Word of God, word of life.

GOSPEL: Luke 16:1-13

The holy gospel according to Luke.

¹Then Jesus said to the disciples,
“There was a rich man who had a manager,
and charges were brought to him
that this man was squandering his property.
²So he summoned him and said to him,
‘What is this that I hear about you?
Give me an accounting of your management,
because you cannot be my manager any longer.’
³Then the manager said to himself,
‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me?
I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg.
⁴I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager,
people may welcome me into their homes.’
⁵So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first,
‘How much do you owe my master?’
⁶He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’
He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’
⁷Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’
He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’
He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’
⁸And his master commended the dishonest manager
because he had acted shrewdly;
for the children of this age
are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation
than are the children of light. ▶

GOSPEL

There are at least two cautions for this complicated reading. First: Do not miss the essential pause between verses 3 and 4. A pause between verses 9 and 10 is nearly as critical. The texture of many readings is to be found in the pauses. Second: Unless the reader has reached some basic conclusions about our Lord’s meaning in verses 8 and 9, the hearer will have little chance of processing them meaningfully in one hearing.

⁹And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

¹⁰“Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.

¹¹If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?

¹²And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own?

¹³No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

The gospel of the Lord.