

September 21

First Reading: Amos 8:4-7

Amos was called by God to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Peace and prosperity in Israel led to corrupt business practices and oppression of the poor. The prophet declares that God will not tolerate such a situation.

⁴ Hear this, you who trample on the needy,
and bring to ruin the poor of the land,
⁵ saying, "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 smaller and the shekel heavier
and practice deceit with false balances,
⁶ buying the poor for silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals
and selling the sweepings of the wheat."

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

Psalm: Psalm 113

The Lord lifts up the poor from the ashes. (Ps. 113:7)

¹ Hallelujah! Give praise, you servants ¹ of the Lord;
praise the name ¹ of the Lord.
² **Let the name of the ¹ Lord be blessed,
from this time forth for- ¹ evermore.**
³ From the rising of the sun to its ¹ going down
let the name of the ¹ Lord be praised.
⁴ **The Lord is high a- ¹ bove all nations;
God's glory a- ¹ bove the heavens. R**
⁵ Who is like the ¹ Lord our God,
who sits en- ¹ throned on high,
⁶ **but stoops ¹ to behold
the heavens ¹ and the earth?**
⁷ The Lord takes up the weak out ¹ of the dust
and lifts up the poor ¹ from the ashes,
⁸ **enthroning them ¹ with the rulers,
with the rulers ¹ of the people.**
⁹ The Lord makes the woman of a ¹ childless house
to be a joyful mother of children. ¹ Hallelujah! **R**

Second Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

The pastoral epistles offer insight into how early Christians understood many practical matters, such as church administration and worship. The church's focused prayer for others is an expression of the single-minded passion God has toward us in Jesus.

¹ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is right and acceptable before God our Savior, ⁴ who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For

there is one God;

there is also one mediator between God and humankind,
Christ Jesus, himself human,

⁶ who gave himself a ransom for all

—this was attested at the right time.⁷ For 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.

Gospel: Luke 16:1-13

Jesus tells the curious story of a dishonest manager who cheats his employer and then is commended by him for having acted so shrewdly. Jesus wonders why his own followers are less creative and diligent in their stewardship given that they are managers of a far more valuable household.

¹ Then 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. ² So 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.’ ³ Then 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. ⁴ I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’ ⁵ So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶ He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ ⁷ Then 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.’ ⁸ And 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. ⁹ And 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. ¹¹ If, then, you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³ No 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.”