

16th Sunday After Pentecost (3rd Lent A)

Exodus 16.2-15

Psalms 105.1-6; 105.37-45

Philippians 1

Matthew 20.1-16

Rev'd Lauren Marton

Enough for Today

In the name of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Amen.

I think there is one question moving quietly beneath all our readings this morning:

Will there be enough?

Enough food.

Enough time.

Enough money.

Enough mercy.

Enough hope.

Enough future.

It's there in Exodus. The Israelites have escaped slavery, but now they are standing in the wilderness — under a hard sky, on dry ground, with empty stomachs and a rising sense of panic. The desert is not romantic in scripture. It is sharp-edged, exposed, unforgiving. And fear begins to work on them. Their memory softens. Egypt, the place of bondage, starts to look almost comforting simply because it was familiar.

Fear does that. It can make even the past seem kinder than it was.

And that same question is there in Jesus' parable.

The workers hired at dawn have borne the weight of the day. They have laboured through the heat, through the dust, through the long slow hours of afternoon. Their backs ache. Their mouths are dry. Then evening comes, and those hired at the very end — those who have scarcely broken a sweat — receive the same wage.

And if we're honest, it grates.

Most of us understand the grumbling. We know that voice. It rises in us quickly enough:

I worked harder.

I gave more.

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I've been here longer.

Surely that must count for something.

We live in a world of measures and comparisons. We count hours, tally effort, weigh value, keep score. But Jesus is not describing the economy of the world. He is showing us the strange, unsettling abundance of the kingdom of heaven.

The landowner says, "Are you envious because I am generous?"

That question lands with a sting.

Because the workers have not been cheated. They have received what was promised. What troubles them is the sight of goodness given to someone else.

And isn't that often where gratitude begins to leak away? Not because we have nothing, but because we are glancing sideways.

Then we turn back to Exodus, and something extraordinary happens. The people complain, and God responds not with thunder, but with bread.

Bread in the morning.

Bread with the dew.

Bread small enough to gather in the palm of the hand.

Manna.

"What is it?" they ask. Because grace often arrives in forms we do not recognise at first. It does not always come as certainty or control. It does not come as abundance stacked in barns. It comes as daily bread.

Enough for today.

Not enough to calm every fear about tomorrow.

Not enough to make dependence unnecessary.

But enough to keep going.

And perhaps that is what makes manna such a hard gift for us to receive. We would rather have security than trust. We would rather store up than wake each morning needing God again.

But manna teaches the heart another way. It teaches that life is a gift. That enough can be holy. That creation is not an endless warehouse of supply, but a living generosity to be received with reverence.

And in this Season of Creation, that matters.

Because the earth itself is groaning under the weight of our restless hunger for more. More growth. More consumption. More extraction. More convenience. And yet the gospel keeps drawing us back to a simpler and more searching question:

What is enough?

Enough for me.

Enough for us.

Enough so that others may live with dignity.

Enough so that rivers run clear, paddocks breathe, forests stand, and children inherit a world still fragrant with life.

Paul, writing from prison, seems to know something of this deeper sufficiency. He writes not with panic, but with steadiness. Not with clenched fists, but with trust. "Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ," he says.

And perhaps that worthy life begins here: by letting go of the need to measure everything.

Because our worth does not come from being first in the vineyard.

It does not come from doing more than everyone else.

It does not come from proving ourselves indispensable.

Our worth comes from the God who keeps going back to the marketplace.

Again and again, the landowner returns. Early morning, midday, late afternoon, almost evening. Looking for those still standing there. The overlooked. The tired. The ones no one else wanted. The ones still waiting.

That is what God is like.

God keeps coming back.

God keeps calling.

God keeps giving.

And in the end, all of us live by that mercy. All of us are fed by bread we did not make.

So perhaps that is what we can hold on to this week.

Notice the manna.

Notice the small mercies that lie like dew on the day.

Notice what has already been placed into your hands.

Give thanks.

Take what you need.

Share what you can.

And if God is generous to someone else, let that be good news too.

Because the same God who fed Israel under the sky of the wilderness, and welcomed the late workers at sundown, is still feeding this weary world — quietly, daily, faithfully — teaching us that in God's hands, there is enough for today.

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May the Christ who meets us with daily bread free us from fear, teach us what is enough, and make us a blessing to one another and to all creation. Amen.