

Proper 21 Year A REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

EPISCOPAL LECTIONARY, YEAR OF SAINT MATTHEW, "A". 18TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EPISTLE CONTAINS THE PHILIPPIANS HYMN, ONE OF THE OLDEST HYMNS IN THE CHURCH! ALSO CALLED THE KENOTIC HYMN" HE POURED HIMSELF OUT "!

Philippians 2:1-13

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,

but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death--even death on a cross.

Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The Gospel

Matthew 21:23-32

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we

say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."

TWO VERY RICH PASSAGES: THE ONE FROM PHILIPPIANS WAS CRUCIAL IN MY OWN DEVELOPMENT AS A CHRISTIAN. "EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!" I AM ILL AT PRESENT, BUT THE POWER AND TRUTH OF THESE WORDS REMAIN UNDIMINISHED. The passage is not a declaration of vain, self-inflating filler. In fact, it points to something almost the opposite. The strength of God is perfected in human weakness. This was a great gift of this hymn to me as a young man. God's exaltation becomes possible only through surrender to one's humility and brokenness. This is the vortex of God's redeeming power. This textual translation above has some errors. The most offensive of which is the word translated as "therefore" in verse 9. The Greek word is "dio". I think in this instance the King James Bible does it best by translating the word here as "Wherefore". This removes any implication that

God has responded to humility as a direct reward for a "right and worthy" action. God's grace and power are tempered and made complete in the humble supplication of our brokenness and sin. This was a special hymn for Saint Paul. He was by nature a man of certainty and self-confidence. This hymn was a gentle, constant reminder that connecting with the power of God and the endless well of His Grace involves more than surrender and submission. Kenosis is key to discipleship. BT

KENOSIS
~~~~~by design

