

**Lessons for Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost**

**August 28, 2022**

Psalm 131 ~ *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; 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.

**Questions to Consider:** Would you rather keep the letter or the spirit of the law?

- Why is it better to ask for mercy than justice?
- What should you learn from the life and faith of your Christian leaders?
- How has God determined your value / worth?
- Should what happens outside the walls stay outside the camp?

**Bonus on next page:** Hymn: Outside the City Walls (*Hebrews 13:1-17*)

## **Outside the City Walls**

*Hebrews 13:1-17*

Outside the city walls, the sacrifice was made,  
Where bodies of the lambs were burned and other refuse laid.  
There Jesus suffered, too, outside the city gate;  
He bore the sins of humankind, was crushed by cruel hate.

Outside the camp He died, where filthy outcasts dwell.  
When Jesus went outside the camp, He came to us as well,  
For we were exiles, too, when there on Calvary  
He gave His life blood for our sin, His death to set us free.

He did not mind the shame of dying on the cross  
Because He knew the greater joy of bringing home the lost.  
Through Jesus' sacrifice we have a lasting home  
Inside a city still to come before the Father's throne.

Christ Jesus, thanks to You, our dwelling place is sure;  
Now we can go outside the walls to care for all the poor.  
The dispossessed and crushed, in prisons of the soul,  
Must hear from us by word and deed: Your love has made them whole!

To those outside the walls, unworthy though they are,  
Send us as angels of Your love to strangers near and far,  
That we may share our goods, good will, and Your Good News  
So they may learn that in Your grace is life they cannot lose.

Δ Now in the Father's sight, through Jesus, His own Son,  
We pray, O Spirit, for Your power: Your will on earth be done.  
All glory be to You; our thanks to You we raise;  
Our joyful hearts are turned to love, and tongues to sing Your praise!

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For Mission Festival, St Paul Lutheran, Kingsville  
Tune: diademata S M D (LSB # 829)