

## The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost: September 26, 2021

**The Collect:** O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. *Amen.*

### The First Lesson

**Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22**

So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is my request. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king." Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?" Esther said, "A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen. Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that." So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated. Mordecai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same month, year by year, as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor.

### Psalm 124

- <sup>1</sup> If it had not been the Lord who was on our side—let Israel now say—
- <sup>2</sup> if it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when our enemies attacked us,
- <sup>3</sup> then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us;
- <sup>4</sup> then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us;
- <sup>5</sup> then over us would have gone the raging waters.
- <sup>6</sup> Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth.
- <sup>7</sup> We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped.
- <sup>8</sup> Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

### The Second Lesson

**James 5:13-20**

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain

and the earth yielded its harvest. My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

### **The Gospel**

**Mark 9:38-50**

John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. "For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

### **The Prayers of the People:**

Speak to our hearts that yearn for you. Teach us to dwell and delight in your presence. Have Mercy, O Lord. **Fill us with the fullness of your grace.**

Speak to your church and our leaders. We pray for Michael, our presiding bishop; Jennifer, our bishop, Mauricio, bishop of Brasilia, Debbie, our priest; The clergy and people of St. Michaels, Noblesville, the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Haiti; and for St. Andre's in Mithon. Energize us with new life and endless possibilities. Teach us to be partners with you in holiness and power.

Have Mercy, O Lord. **Fill us with the fullness of your grace.**

We pray for our President, our Congress, and our courts. May harmony in diversity begin with us. Speak peace to the leaders of the nations, that conflicts may cease and mutual respect across boundaries and languages may prevail. Have Mercy, O Lord. **Fill us with the fullness of your grace.**

Bring the peoples of the world together so that all will be fed and warm, and none will be threatened, that the language of hope is spoken freely in all corners of the globe.

Have mercy, O Lord. **Fill us with the fullness of your grace.**

We pray for all who cry out in pain and those who suffer in silence for those who await healing and for those who have lost hope. For those who have asked for our prayers and those who have no one to pray for them, bring your healing power to those who need it most.

Have mercy, O Lord. **Fill us with the fullness of your grace.**

We pray for those who have ended their earthly journey and now are surrounded by angels and archangels and their unending songs of praise. **Bring us also to that heavenly shore and the fullness of your eternal grace.**