

Sunday, September 26, 2021 – Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Reading: Numbers 11

4-6 - The Israelites wept again and said, "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at."

10-15 - Moses heard the people weeping, all at the entrances of their tents. So Moses said to the LORD, "Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, 'Carry them to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors'? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they come weeping to me and say, 'Give us meat to eat!' I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once—if I have found favor in your sight—and do not let me see my misery."

16 - So the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel; bring them to the tent of meeting and have them take their place there with you."

24-25 - So Moses went out and gathered seventy elders of the people and placed them all around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and took some of the spirit that was on (Moses) and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again.

When have the circumstances and challenges of life gotten to be just too much for you? What did you do about it?

Did you go to God about it? If not, why not?

If you did, how did God help you? What did God do about it?

When have you carried more responsibility than you were able to or should have had to carry? Cf. one definition of worry

What are you doing that someone else could and/or should be doing?

Psalm: Psalm 19:7-14

Each of these verses has some word for God's Word – teaching, testimony, statutes, commandment, judgments.

How have you found God's Word to revive your soul, give you wisdom, make your heart rejoice, give light to your eyes, be clear and clean, be more desirable than gold, and be sweeter than honey?

7 - The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.

8 - The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.

9 - The fear of the LORD is clean and endures forever;

the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

10 - More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.

11 - By them is your servant enlightened, and in keeping them there is great reward.

How and when have you experienced great reward from keeping God's commandments?

Second Reading: James 5:13-20

13 - Are any among you suffering? They should pray.

14 - 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.

15 - The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.

16 - Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.

16 - The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

17-18 - 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.

Do you believe that prayer is powerful and effective?

When and how have you experienced prayer being powerful and effective?

God will not act contrary to His own nature because of our prayers, but I believe that sometimes He will do something that He would not have done, and sometimes He will not do something that He would have done if His people pray.

Genesis 18: 32 – (God) answered (Abraham), "For the sake of ten I will not destroy (Sodom)."

Exodus 32: 14 – And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

Gospel: Mark 9:38-50

50 – Be at peace with one another.

What would it take to make that any more possible than what Rodney King asked in March 1991 – "Can we all get along?"

Ephesians 4: 31-32 –

Put away all bitterness and anger, wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven you

It is only if and when we have experienced God's kindness, tasted His compassion, and received His forgiveness that we are able to get along.

That we are able to really be at peace with one another.