

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

**Occasion:** Proper 22

*Sunday, October 6, 2019*

**Year (cycle):** C

**Resource Website Links:**

[The Collect/Readings<sup>1</sup>](#)

[Book/Passage Summaries<sup>2</sup>](#)

[Reflection Question\(s\)<sup>3</sup>](#)

[Art Reflection Slideshow<sup>4</sup>](#)

**The Collect:**

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Reading 1

**Old Testament:**

Lamentations 1:1-6

1 How lonely sits the city

that once was full of people!

How like a widow she has become,

she that was great among the nations!

She that was a princess among the provinces

has become a vassal.

2 She weeps bitterly in the night,

with tears on her cheeks;

among all her lovers

she has no one to comfort her;

all her friends have dealt treacherously with her,

they have become her enemies.

3 Judah has gone into exile with suffering

and hard servitude;

she lives now among the nations,  
and finds no resting-place;  
her pursuers have all overtaken her  
in the midst of her distress.

4 The roads to Zion mourn,  
for no one comes to the festivals;  
all her gates are desolate,  
her priests groan;  
her young girls grieve,  
and her lot is bitter.

5 Her foes have become the masters,  
her enemies prosper,  
because the Lord has made her suffer  
for the multitude of her transgressions;  
her children have gone away,  
captives before the foe.

6 From daughter Zion has departed  
all her majesty.  
Her princes have become like stags  
that find no pasture;  
they fled without strength  
before the pursuer.

[Link to Passage Summary](#)

## Reflection Question(s):

Lamentations 1:1-6

Sometimes, we just need to give voice to our grief. The worst thing we can do is to ignore it—push it aside because it is too painful. In today’s Old Testament reading, the author is facing the reality that Jerusalem, a city that was once full of glory, prosperity, and prominence, has fallen. It is a raw time for the author, a time to face the unforgiving reality of sorrow and suffering head-on. Through it all, though, God is there. The pain is a crucible from which the Jewish people will emerge; God will see them through it. That’s the interesting thing about Lamentations—it’s one long prayer, a prayer of expression, a lifting up of one’s pain to God. God can take the pain, God wants us to lift our pain to God because God wants all our humanity, not just the clean and neat parts.

- How do you give voice to your grief?
- How do you bring your grief to prayer?

[Link to Art Reflection Slideshow](#)

## Reading 2

**Psalm 137**

- 1 By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, \*  
when we remembered you, O Zion.
- 2 As for our harps, we hung them up \*  
on the trees in the midst of that land.
- 3 For those who led us away captive asked us for a song,  
and our oppressors called for mirth: \*  
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion.”
- 4 How shall we sing the Lord’s song \*  
upon an alien soil?
- 5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, \*  
let my right hand forget its skill.
- 6 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth  
if I do not remember you, \*  
if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.
- 7 Remember the day of Jerusalem, O Lord,  
against the people of Edom, \*  
who said, “Down with it! down with it!

even to the ground!”

8 O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, \*  
happy the one who pays you back  
for what you have done to us!

9 Happy shall he be who takes your little ones, \*  
and dashes them against the rock!

### [Link to Passage Summary](#)

#### **Reflection Question(s):**

Psalm: 137

This is a psalm that very few Christians like. It is brutal and contains some of the most disturbing imagery found in scripture. “Happy shall be he who takes your little ones, and dashes them against the rock” (Psalm 137:9, BCP). Who can find God in that? But when we imagine the echoes in which this psalm is written, we can understand where the author is coming from. Jerusalem has been razed to the ground, many of her inhabitants killed—men, women, children, and even infants. God’s temple was plundered and destroyed, and a majority of the survivors were taken captive to Babylon. This is a harsh memory of ruthless violence.

And the author does not shy away from the feelings created by this event. The author’s raw and exposed emotion is on full display for all to see. The words are offered up to God as an authentic, though disturbing, reflection on not only the author’s emotional and spiritual state but also the Jewish people’s emotional and spiritual state.

This is something we try to shy away from when talking to God—the offering up of our unclean and polluted thoughts. “How honest can I be?” we ask ourselves.

We sometimes try to hide the dark bits of our humanity, thinking that they might offend God or turn God away from us. But God can take it. We can offer those feelings up to God and let God hold them, let God have them so that God can help us through those times when our thoughts are less than magnanimous. We just need to trust that the God in which we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28, NRSV) is there regardless of our emotional or spiritual state. We just need to open ourselves up to God’s abundantly generous grace.

- Have you ever been ashamed of your thoughts?
- Do you try to hide those thoughts from God?

- What would it feel like if you openly and authentically offered your whole humanity to God?

[Link to Art Reflection Slideshow](#)

## Reading 3

### Epistle:

2 Timothy 1:1-14

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy.

5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.

6 For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; 7 for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

8 Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

11 For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, 12 and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. 13 Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

14 Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

[Link to Passage Summary](#)

## Reflection Question(s):

2 Timothy 1:1-14

Paul writes something very interesting to Timothy. He writes, “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you” (v. 5, NRSV). How important it is to pass our faith down to future generations. We should want to pass it down because our faith should inspire us, excite us, and inform the very essence of who we are and who we want to be. And that’s the thing—our faith is a living faith. But a living faith needs to be lived, explored, challenged, and internalized until it becomes part of our DNA. Then, and only then, can our faith be passed down, like a dominant physical trait, from one generation to another. The only way to spread the Good News of Jesus is to live it and proclaim it, especially to those closest to us.

- How do you proclaim the gospel to those closest to you?

[Link to Art Reflection Slideshow](#)

## Reading 4

**Gospel:**

Luke 17:5-10

5 The apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith!’ 6The Lord replied, ‘If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, “Be uprooted and planted in the sea”, and it would obey you.

7 ‘Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, “Come here at once and take your place at the table”? 8Would you not rather say to him, “Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink”? 9Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? 10So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, “We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!” ’

[Link to Passage Summary](#)

## **Reflection Question(s):**

Luke 17:5-10

Our faith asks that we give ourselves fully and completely to God. In doing so, we will be compelled to serve God fully and completely. Serving God involves not only loving God but also loving our neighbors as ourselves (Lk. 10:25-28). In loving God, we serve others, giving our time, talent, and treasure to ensuring that the dignity of every human being is realized. We do this not just because it is the right thing to do, but because every single human is made in the image of God and is known by God long before he or she was fashioned in the womb. No thank-you is needed. No attention desired. We only do what we ought to do (Lk. 17:10, NRSV) because as followers of Christ, we cannot do anything else. This is not easy at times; we have doubts, frustrations, and anxieties to wrestle with as we work to selflessly give ourselves over to God and others. We must rely on our faith —faith that God is there supporting us and holding us as we give ourselves over to the work of building God’s Kingdom here on earth.

- How do you serve God and others?
- How does your faith help you in that service?

**[Link to Art Reflection Slideshow](#)**

## **Sources**

<sup>1</sup> “Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost, ” *The Episcopal Church*, <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/lectionary/seventeenth-sunday-after-pentecost-1>

<sup>2</sup> Chris Haslam, “Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost-October 6, 2019,” *Comments: Revised Lectionary Commentary*, <http://montreal.anglican.org/comments/cpr27m.shtml?>

<sup>3</sup>Daniel Johnson, “Pentecost 17 (C)-October 6, 2019”, *Bible Study*, <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/bible-study/bible-study-pentecost-17-c-october-6-2019>

<sup>4</sup> The Revised Common Lectionary, “Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost Year C”, *Slideshow Formats*, <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/slides.php>