

Listening to God's Word

Our Bible readings for Sunday 20th September are:

Jonah 3.10 - end of chapter 4

Jonah's anger at the Lord's compassion

¹⁰When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

4 But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. ²He prayed to the LORD, 'Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. ³Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.'

⁴But the LORD replied, 'Is it right for you to be angry?'

⁵Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. ⁶Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. ⁷But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. ⁸When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die,

and said, 'It would be better for me to die than to live.'

⁹But God said to Jonah, 'Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?'

'It is,' he said. 'And I'm so angry I wish I were dead.'

¹⁰But the LORD said, 'You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. ¹¹And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left – and also many animals?'

Matthew 20.1-16

The parable of the workers in the vineyard

20 'For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ²He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

³'About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the market-place doing nothing. ⁴He told them, "You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." ⁵So they went.

'He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. ⁶About five in the afternoon

he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?"

⁷ "Because no one has hired us," they answered.

'He said to them, "You also go and work in my vineyard."

⁸ 'When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, "Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first."

⁹ 'The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰ So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ¹² "These who were hired last worked only one hour," they said, "and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day."

¹³ 'But he answered one of them, "I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. ¹⁵ Don't I have

the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?"

¹⁶ 'So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'