God Provides

Exodus 16:2-15 Philippians 1:21-30 Matthew 20: 1-16

RR: Psalm 119: 33-40

**Summary:** And what does God provide? There is light and the resources of Creation, life, love, Himself, forgiveness, and the special bonus round: to the world, God gives us and to us, God gives each other.

 My theme today is “God provides.” This is not news to us, and if anyone asks us what God provides, our answer would probably be, “Everything.” Nonetheless, some divine gifts particularly stand out.

 In the Beginning, God’s first words involve light. A friend of mine mentioned that light and life go together, and that life could not exist without the energy of light to sustain it. I like that thought, particularly when I remember that the Light of the World, Jesus, came with an enlightenment providing life everlasting.

 The Hebrew Scriptures speak of quails and manna, God providing our daily food. Yet, even this basic gift has a deeper meaning when we remember Jesus saying, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” He said this after his curious disciples wondered why he didn’t take a lunch break instead of talking to the woman at the well. His point was that what really nourished him was to do God’s will and spread the Gospel of forgiveness and love.

 So, God provides light, life, and the resources of Creation, supplemented with love and forgiveness. Also, as Don has been carefully teaching, God not only loves and forgives, but gives us the ability – even the responsibility – to love and to forgive. Life itself gives us the opportunity to do both these things.

 Faith is more than the opportunity to believe in God; it is our chance to join the divine family in creating a new Heaven and a new Earth. This kind of faith involves a lot more effort and pain than simply “cashing in” belief for an eternal reward, but this is precisely why Paul chose to continue his ministry, even in chains.

 Life brought Paul to what I call “the bonus round of God’s providing love.” You see, God provides Paul with so much, so that God may provide Paul to so many!

 In our Gospel lesson, we saw many workers, hired at all hours of the day, everyone being offered the same wage. That scene when the workers grumbled and resented the latecomers at the end of the day played out in one of my favorite movies, “The Shoes of the Fisherman.”

In that movie, an important cardinal in the Vatican becomes jealous of the close relationship which a radical priest has with the new Pope. He confesses this to the Pope and says, “I thought that I should get more attention and honor for my years of faithful service, but now I know that none of us should expect more than the promised wages Jesus offered.”

 Those wages are eternal and abundant life. God gives us everything in Creation, gives Himself, and then gives us back to Creation. We hear people wondering what God will do about the problem of evil; **we** are what God ***is doing*** about that! So, God also provides us. And, to us, God also provides each other.

 Now, let’s go forth from worship into the world, secure in what God provides and provide ourselves as God gives us the opportunity!