

An Analytical Translation of the Readings For Mass

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time / Cycle A.

Reading

ישעיהו Isaiah 55:6-9

Seek the Eternal Being while He can be found,
Call to Him while He is near.
Let the troublemaker give up his ways,
The vain nobody [ve iysh áven] * his plans;
Let him turn back to the Eternal Being [YHVH],
And He will pardon him;
To our Infinite God [Elo-heiy-nu],
For He freely forgives.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways My ways, declares Eternity [YHVH].
As the heavens [shamo-yim] are higher than the land [mei-arets],*
So are My ways above your ways,
And My thoughts above your thoughts.

Notes

* This literally translates to: *ve*, and, *iysh*, man of, *áven*, nothingness, or 'and the vain man'.
Other translations of the Bible translate these words as 'and the wicked man' or 'and the evil man'.
Apparently, there is, in the Hebrew idiom, a relationship between doing nothing,
or thinking of worthless things, and being an evil person. What is the saying?
"Idle hands are the devil's playground."
*[mei-arets] means 'than land' or 'than the earth'.

Words in Light Italic are instructions to the reader or deleted parts of verses.

Reading 2

ΠΡΟΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΗΣΙΟΥΣ / Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a

Brothers and sisters:

*It is by my eager expectation and hope, that by nothing will I be put to shame,
but in all boldness now as always,*
the Anointed One [Christ] will be shown as magnificent [megalüntheísetai]
in my body [sômatí],
whether through life [zōeîs] or through death [thanátu].
For to me, to live [zeîn] is the Anointed [Christ] and to die [apothaneîn] is gain.
But if I am to go on living in the flesh [sarkí], that is fruitful [karpòs] labor [érgu] for me;
and I do not know which I *will want* to choose. I am caught between the two [düo],
my desire [epithûmían] is to depart and be with the Anointed One;
for that is much [pollô] [mállon] better,
but to stay in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

Skip to verse 27, and read only the first part.

Act as worthy citizens [politeû-esthe] of the Anointed One's joyful report [eungelíu]....

Gospel

KATA MAΘΘΑΙΟΝ / Matthew 20:1-16a

Yeshua gave his students this comparison:

The reign of the skies is like a house supervisor who went out early at dawn to hire, for pay, workers [ergátas] for his vineyard. Having agreed on the wages of the day, he sent them out [apésteilen] into his vineyard. And having gone out three hours after daybreak, he saw others standing around idle in the marketplace [agorâ]; and he said to them, You also go into the vineyard, and I will give you whatever is right [díkaiou]. So they went. Then he went out again about the sixth [héktein] and ninth [enátein] hour [hōran] after dawn and did the same thing. And around the eleventh [hendekátein] hour after daybreak [five o'clock], having gone out, he found others who were standing there: and said to them, Why are you standing here idle for the whole day? They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us for wages.* He said to them, You also go out into the vineyard. When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his caretaker, Call the workers and give them their pay, beginning with the last [eskhátōn] and then going on to the first [prôtōn]. When those hired on the eleventh hour of daylight came, each of them received the usual payment in cash. So when the first came, they thought that they would get more, but each of them also got the same amount in cash. And on receiving it they grumbled against the house supervisor [oikodespótu], saying, These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day's burden and the burning heat. He said to one of them in reply, My dear fellow, I am not doing you wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual day's cash? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to the last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I want with what I have? Or do you have the evil eye because I am good? So the last will be first, and the first will be last.

Notes

* Payment in cash, as opposed to food or barter.

Commentary

The house supervisor may represent God, the vineyard the world, and the workers are the worshipers of the one true God. The day is a person's life span, and the work is living one's life according to God's fairness. The pay is living in the realm of God which is the reign of the skies. The point of the story is that God rewards one's convictions and intentions, not one's achievements. The house supervisor paid the workers because they were willing to work in the vineyard, not for how long they worked in the vineyard. New converts enter the realm of God the same as lifelong devotees.