

Trinity 15

(There are three choices of propers for each office this week) A Homily is provided for Morning Prayer A, and one for Evening Prayer A. Others are to be written.

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Ecclesiasticus 5:1-10

Second Lesson: Luke 12:13-21

Homily

It's a simple story, one you hear often,
all too often, one that destroys families,
and raises grudges that just don't go away.
A man died and left a good-sized estate.
He had two sons,
and the young men could not agree
about the inheritance,
They fought and argued over
which should get what.
Now, Jesus had just finished speaking
of the persecution to come, saying this:

*"... when they bring you ..
unto magistrates, and powers,
take ye no thought how
or what thing ye shall answer ...*

*for the Holy Ghost shall teach you
in the same hour what ye ought to say."*

It was a powerful and demanding message,
a call for an incredible degree of self-sacrifice --
but this man was so consumed
with his inheritance,
so torn up over the unfairness of it all,
that all he heard was, "court" --
and he immediately began, perhaps,
with these thoughts:
"Well, speaking of going to court ..."
and laid out his case,
demanding that Jesus set his brother straight.

Did you notice just who it was
that Jesus desired to set straight?

"Why are you so concerned with these things?"
he asked.
"Why are you so anxious for what he has?
Does it really matter in the long run?"
And He told a story
about a man who had everything.
He had so much he had no place to put it all.
So he built new barns -- and then he died.
What good was all that stuff?

Our Lord may have been thinking of such teaching as that in our Old Testament Lesson today.

"Set your heart upon what you already have," it begins, "instead of complaining it's not enough." Don't rely only on what you think is right. God may have His own idea of that, and you will not only be going against his will, but your pride will be offensive to Him. You'll be adding sin on top of sin, and that only makes things worse. Maybe you've been getting away with sin after sin, maybe you've decided you can continue that way, but unrepented sin is something for which He holds us responsible, and the day of reckoning will come.

You see, the young man may have been right, so far as the law is concerned. His brother may indeed have been treating him unfairly. His case might have been watertight. But none of that mattered, Jesus knew his heart.. Jesus knew that his first thought was of himself, and, if the truth be known, it never got beyond that.

What his brother had, he wanted. Well, the Tenth Commandment is -- "Thou shalt not covet." Wanting to get something someone else has, to take it from him for ourselves, is simply not the worthiest of motives. This man was probably within his rights, but his heart was wrong.

Let's expand this thought into our whole life. We, as Americans, are always talking about "rights". We're always justifying ourselves by saying, "I have a right to ..." (whatever the expressed intent is.) That might be true, but where is our heart? Are we really concerned about others? About those we have chosen to call enemies, even? Are we telling God that He won't provide for us if we do our best to do His will? Is it really true that we don't have enough if we don't get what we think is our right?

Friends, our God clothes the lilies of the field, He feeds the sparrows of the air, and He made us in His own image, to be His sons and daughters. Will He do less for us?

Do we need all the stuff we desire?
Do we need all the rights we claim?
Do we need anything at all but Him?

Let us pray.

Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us.
Deliver us from the bondage of our own will,
our own desires, our lack of trust.
Turn our hearts toward Thee, and Thy will.
Cause us to live this life in peace and contentment.
Fill us with love for those who use us wrongly,
and bring us at last to Thy presence,
where true treasures may be found.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Deut 7:6-13

Second Lesson: Gal 2:15-20

Homily to be written

see also the sermon by Canon Hollister
under this date
in the Sermons by Other Authors

Trinity 15

Morning Prayer C

First Lesson: Exod 2:1-22

Second Lesson: James 4

Homily to be written

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Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Ecclesiastes 5:8-20

Second Lesson: 1 Tim 6:1-10

Homily

Did you listen closely to the Scripture readings?

Did they annoy you a bit?

Do you feel a bit threatened
by what they ask of you?

You should. We all should.

Unless, of course,

you want to apply it all to someone else,
and use Scripture as a weapon
with which to judge others.

That's only natural.

We all want to do that.

We'd rather be the righteous ones,
and be able to look down on others.

But that isn't how it should be.

Remember the story Jesus told,
about the speck in your brother's eye,
and the log in your own eye.

Judgment starts at home.

This sermon is for rich people,
and for poor ones.

It's for wildly successful businessmen,
and for the people that work for them.

It's for those who give orders,
and for those who take orders,
for those who have more than the rest of us,
and for those who don't have that much.

God doesn't see people in categories.
He's not impressed by what we have,
He's not interested in our class or status.
He doesn't have two sets of rules.

You might say that both of these lessons
are about economics.

They certainly are about the use of power,
and the possession of things,
and what God expects of us
in the handling of what he has given us.

Do we have?

Have we been blessed with material goods?

If we're Americans,
even if we feel poor and deprived,
we most certainly do.

Almost all of us have more things
than any but the most extravagantly wealthy
of Bible times,

and there are those today in this world
 who would look at our poorest with envy.
 How thankful are we?

Listen to the words from Ecclesiastes:

*“Every man also
 to whom God hath given riches and wealth,
 and hath given him power to eat thereof,
 and to take his portion,
 and to rejoice in his labour;
 this is the gift of God.*

Whatever we have,
 the ability to earn it
 the ability to use it,
 it’s a gift from God.
 Are we thankful,
 or do we complain that we don’t have more?

The good things of life are good
 God intends that we enjoy them
 The notion one sometimes hears
 that money and possessions are bad
 is a foolish notion.
 Sometimes it is said,
 on the belief that Scripture is being quoted,
 that money is the root of all evil.
 Our Lesson from St. Paul today does not say that.

The quotation is actually this:

*... the love of money is the root of all evil:
 which while some coveted after,
 they have erred from the faith,
 and pierced themselves through
 with many sorrows.*

Ecclesiastes says the same thing:

*There is a sore evil
 which I have seen under the sun,
 namely, riches kept for the owners thereof
 to their hurt.*
 and he adds, as he does so often,

“This, too, is vanity.”

Our God indeed does give us things,
 and He gives them in abundance,
 and expects them to be enjoyed,
 but our own enjoyment is not the main purpose
 for which He gives them.

They are to enable us to do as He desires,
 to show that we love God
 with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength,
 and that we love our neighbors.
 To let material things be more important than these

is to worship them, rather than God.

When we need more and more to be happy,
when we hold on to it for ourselves,
when we fail to help those that need,
when we envy those who have more than we do,
it is the sin of idolatry.

It is the worship of the one the ancients called
“Mammon”, the god of money and wealth,
and, as Our Lord pointed out,
*“No man can serve two masters ...
... ye cannot serve both God and Mammon,”*

Yes, we are to enjoy the things of the earth,
but it really does matter what we do with them,
and how we think about them.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who declarest
thy glory and showest forth thy handiwork in the
heavens And in the earth; deliver us, we beseech
thee, in our several callings, from the service of
mammon, that we may do the work which thou
givest us to do, in truth, in beauty, and in
righteousness, with singleness of heart as thy
servants, and to the benefit of our fellow men; for the

sake of him who came among us as one that
serveth, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: Joel 2:21-27

Second Lesson: Matt 6:24-34

Homily to be written

Trinity 15

Evening Prayer C

First Lesson: 1 Kings 8:22-30, 54-63

Second Lesson: Acts 18:1-17

Homily to be written