

Lessons for the Eighth Sunday after the Epiphany

Psalm 115:(1-8)9-18 ~ *It takes trust in God to praise Him in the face of other nation's idolatry.*

Isaiah 49:8-16a ~ *God cannot forget His people even though they despair of His care.*

1 Corinthians 4:1-13 ~ *St. Paul chided the Corinthians for their pride in God's material gifts to them.*

Matthew 6:24-34 ~ *Jesus taught the Father cares for His people; they need not be slaves of money.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Trust God in All Things!

Our inclination is to depend on ourselves to provide the essential of life: food, drink, house, and clothing; and forget about life itself. When we recognize that God has given us our bodies and even the breath of life, those things we usually strive for become pluses, extras. Blessings in life are not the signs of God's favor, nor is suffering an indications of His displeasure. In Isaiah's day, God promised to rescue His people from exile, but they were more concerned about the little things of life and complained that God had forgotten them. God does not forget those whom He has given spiritual life.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Most generous Father, You provide for all my needs far more than I can imagine! Forgive me for my lack of trust when things of daily sustenance seem less than I desire. Let me see Your greater goodness in rescuing me from death and giving me the righteousness of Christ for all eternity. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: Everything we have comes from God's hand. When we share with others, it is God's way of meeting their needs. We share the message of God's salvation in Christ so they may also know the greatness of God's love.

OFFERING PRAYER: The birds that sing to You our King,
And flowers so beautiful indeed,
Remind us that the gifts we bring
Are Yours for helping those in need. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: We worry ourselves over matters of sustenance: food, clothing, daily needs. Then we see what we have and think we have provided well for ourselves. Our failure to trust God makes us slaves to material goods, servants to money. We overlook God's steadfast love that has met our greatest need through the sacrifice of His own Son in the flesh. He has rescued us from the desolation of sin and death, but in our preoccupation with self, we accuse God of forgetting us. Christ has become our servant. In Christ God does not condemn, but rather commends us.