

Lessons for The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

July 9, 2017

Psalm 145:1-14 [*Antiphon vs. 19*]

Zechariah 9:9-12 ~ *God promised peace through the Messiah as exiles returned to rebuild Jerusalem.*

Romans 7:15-25a ~ *Only God in Christ can rescue us from the conflict of wills in our lives.*

Matthew 11:25-30 ~ *Jesus offers weary people his easy yoke in place of their heavy burdens.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Rest for the Weary

The people of Jerusalem, returning from exile in Babylon, were discouraged by the monumental task of rebuilding the city. They were encouraged by God's promise through Zechariah: "See, your king comes to you." That very King, who had come into Jerusalem riding on a donkey, is the One in whom the Apostle Paul found comfort and rescue as he struggled daily against the work of sin in his life. That very King is the One who reveals the Father's love and power through his death and resurrection and still invites us daily to lay down the burden of our sin and to rest in the comfort of his easy yoke.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord Jesus, You of the easy yoke and light burden, when I struggle against the power of sin in my life, rescue me from this body of death so that I may know the peace of sins forgiven and promise of life in heaven. Lighten my heart with the power of Your love. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: We demonstrate that we fear, love, and trust God first, when we return the first fruits of our lives to His service.

OFFERING PRAYER: O Lord, we are burdened by our love of things,
While joy comes from living in service to You.
Release us from bondage that ownership brings
And strengthen our trust and reliance on You. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: Political struggles in this world mirror the conflict of wills in our hearts. We are worn down by our support for particular ideologies, our pursuit of certain agendas, our trust in favorable powers. We long for peace in our world and in our lives, but the resolutions we seek only bind us in further conflict and insure our spiritual death. Only the promised Messiah, who was anointed the Prince of Peace, offers us rest in His unbounded grace and the eternal security of His love.