

Lessons for The Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

November 12, 2017

Psalm 70 ~ *God's people turn to Him for help when they face the threats of their enemies.*

Amos 5:18–24 ~ *The day of the Lord will be dark for those who practice religious appearance but not justice.*

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 ~ *Our grief is tempered by hope in the One who died and rose again to receive us to Himself.*

Matthew 25:1–13 ~ *Those whose faith is refreshed in our Lord's promises will be received into His eternal banquet.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: “Sinner Man, Where Ya’ Gonna Run To?”

To avoid condemnation, we run and hide, as Adam did in the Garden. Amos warned that one may flee from a lion and run into a bear! Better to replace our outward, religious show with true justice! As we faithfully await the return of Christ, the Bridegroom, we will replenish our lamps of faith with His promises; it is foolish to run to other sources of “wisdom”. On the last day, we will run to Christ Jesus, the One who died and rose again to save us from the power of sin and death and take us to be with Himself forever!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord God, let me run to you, not away, so that I may eagerly await the return of Christ Jesus my Savior, who came to claim me from the powers of sin and death that I may be His own for all eternity. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God calls upon us to practice justice toward the poor and downtrodden, using the goods He has placed into our hands to share the gift of His love. No show of religion will cover over our failure to trust the justice Christ fulfilled on our behalf.

OFFERING PRAYER: O Lord, You are the One who gives light to our days and enlightens the use of these gifts in our hands.
Let our love shine with fervor to guide all our ways
that the waters of justice may cover our lands. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: Just as the people of Amos' day, we find ourselves practicing religious showmanship instead of justice, more concerned with public relations than with the delivery of goods to the poor and downtrodden. The day of the Lord will reveal a dawn of darkness rather than light for those who seek the wisdom of this world rather than rely on the gift of God's grace to fill their lives with the light of God's love. Those who trust in the Lord and the justice Christ won on the cross will be received into the bright light of God's presence on the day of His coming.