

Lessons for Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

August 21, 2022

Psalm 50:1-15 ~ *The Lord calls his people to accountability in trust rather than sacrifice.*

Isaiah 66:18-23 ~ *God will gather His people from all nations into a new heaven and new earth.*

Hebrews 12:4-24 (25-29) ~ *God disciplines His children to yield the fruit of righteousness in their lives.*

Luke 13:22-30 ~ *Jesus taught that many will seek to enter the kingdom, but will reject His invitation.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: God's Real, Holy Future

In Christ our Lord, God has promised us a future that is real and holy. Our lessons today assure us that heaven is no "pie in the sky by and by". It is as real as the sacrifices that were offered in the temple on Mount Zion. It is no mundane, "realistic expectation." It is as holy as the glory of the Lord God of heaven and earth. If we belittle this hope or reject God's promise, the door will be closed; we will be locked outside. But when we know the King and the blood of his new covenant, God's real, holy future is ours!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord God of all nations, thank you for your gracious love in Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior. Help me reach out to people of every tribe and nation, of every community and class, to share with them the promise of your presence and the hope of your glory. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: Learning to trust and depend on God shows itself in how we use the material blessings he has placed into our hands. We learn to extend God's grace through our patient care and assistance to those in need, never failing to speak the Word of God which propels the loving deed.

OFFERING PRAYER: Lord, help us strive for peace with everyone,
And learn to trust You always, and rejoice,
Employ these gifts to lead the wayward ones
That they may know Your love and hear Your voice. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: "He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored." (*Proverbs 13:18 NIV*) We are inclined to protest suffering in our lives instead of learning lessons of patience and dependence on God's mercy. When we are too self-assured to receive instruction, we miss the invitation to Christ's kingdom; the Master says, "I do not know where you come from." God draws us in from all the nations of the earth with His grace through Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, whose blood speaks us righteous.

Questions to Consider: Why do we think good is good and suffering is evil?

- How does God plan to draw all nations and tongues to see His glory?
- What is the difference between suffering and punishment?
- Why is there a difference between striving to enter the kingdom and entering by invitation?
- What makes the future God has in mind for us holy?

Bonus on next page: Poem: The Stocking Cap

The Stocking Cap

In the corner of a trunk I found it,
cradled up beside the family Bible
where you kept the names and dates
that told you who you were
long after you forgot just what they meant.

An old, blue, stocking cap!

The same warm feeling covered me
as on that day you pulled it down upon my head
and took me from the children's home,
the newest member of your family.

And now, because you are not there,
I keep it by the window where you used to sit,
to tell me who I am,
and to remind me who I was
before you found me.

- Gilbert A. Franke, 06/20/08