

Lessons for Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 25, 2016

Psalm 146 (*antiphon: verse 2*) ~ *Praise to God who gives help and hope to the poor and rescues the oppressed.*

Amos 6:1-7 ~ *Amos warned the wealthy who took advantage of the poor that God would judge them.*

1 Timothy 6:6-19 ~ *True treasures are found in Christ's love for us and are stored by sharing with others.*

Luke 16:19-31 ~ *Jesus' parable teaches that NOW is the time to respond to those who suffer.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Don't Mistake Living for Life.

The prophet Amos warned the wealthy people of his day that the life of luxury is not a seal of God's approval. St. Paul warned Timothy to beware of the deception of riches, which many people set their hopes upon, instead of trusting in God who in Christ alone gives us that which is truly life. Jesus contrasted the luxurious living of the rich man with the miserable life of Lazarus, to uncover the eternal consequences of a self-sufficient life and one which is dependent on the mercy of our gracious God. Eternal life, won for us by Christ who rose from the dead, is worth much more than all the luxuries of this world.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Holy Spirit, open my eyes to see the difference between the Life bought by the blood of Christ and the temporary living that is secured only by such things as silver and gold. Help me talk to my sisters and brothers in this life, using the possessions you have provided me, in ways that will point them to the Life that has no end. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God has given us great riches in forgiveness and eternal life. He also blesses us with material goods necessary to support our bodily life. By sharing with those in physical need, we may open the door of eternal life to them through the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

OFFERING PRAYER: O Lord, You bless us in so many ways!
Your love surrounds us all our days!
Move us to wrap Your love around the poor
Who lack for faith, and food, and more. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: When we think our material circumstances are signs of God's approval or disapproval, we may become depressed or self-satisfied. We may give up on life or look down on people in need. Whether poor or wealthy, we are completely dependent on the riches of God's grace in Jesus Christ, who by His faithful witness, has given us what is truly the abundant life.