

Lessons for the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 18, 2024

Psalm 34:12–22 ~ *A psalm extolling the way of wisdom, good over evil, righteousness over wickedness.*

Proverbs 9:1–10 ~ *A wise person learns of sin from the Law of God and turns to the gift of God's Grace.*

Or Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18 ~ *Joshua charged the people to serve God alone and forsake false gods.*

Ephesians 5:6–21 ~ *In Christ, God has called us to live in the light of His love by the power of the Spirit.*

John 6:51–69 ~ *Jesus' word promises us life in place of death through the gift of His body and blood.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Without a Doubt

God calls us to a banquet prepared by his wisdom: "Come, leave your simple ways and walk in the way of understanding." Wouldn't it be wonderful to have all the answers to our complex life? God offers the answers to everything that matters: St. Paul wrote "Understand the Lord's will so you can live wisely in this wicked world." Jesus offers us the food of eternal life, his body and blood. We (BB&B) can have it, no questions asked, without a doubt!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: O Holy Spirit, I have often used my time unwisely and sometimes embraced ways that are contrary to your will. Help me eat and drink fully at your banquet of grace through Jesus, my Savior, so that I will be able to live by the wisdom of God's righteousness. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: It is a wise person who can take criticism constructively, especially in spiritual and in financial matters. Perhaps that is because the way we use material blessings reflects how we appreciate God's spiritual gifts.

OFFERING PRAYER: When we feed on You, Lord, it is a gracious thing –
Holy Body broken and precious Blood of life.
Gracious, too, Your doing, to take these gifts we bring,
Blessing them for healing a world torn up in strife. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: If it is a matter of sophistication, then our problem is that we are offended by the simple invitation to "Come, eat and drink; walk in the way of insight." Presented with a clear choice, as the people of Joshua's day were, we would be reasonable to choose life over death. But if it is a matter of light and darkness, then we can do nothing better than to hear the call of the Spirit, be awakened from our slumber of spiritual death, eat the Bread of life, and live forever.