

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost (Proper 11)
Sunday, July 18, 2021

This world is temporary. We each live our portion and in our time, lay down our fight against the enemies of this age. The Lord goes with us every step of the way, but our short time here comes to an end. So it was as Nathan prophesied concerning David. The Lord will not live in a house built in this age by human hands. But one was to come from the lineage of David and He would be the One to build the house.

The house of the Lord is not made of wood and stone, but of flesh and blood. It has not been fashioned with hammer or chisel, but through the suffering that comes in this age. Those who live in the hope of Jesus, the One whom David's kingdom foretold, is the One who knits together the communion of saints: what we call the church. Did not Jesus say, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days?" The temple of the Lord is where He dwells. He means to dwell in you.

What we do here is to be done together. First, together with the Lord and second, with one another as the body of Christ. We are not called to accomplish many things for their own sake, but called to work together as one. The Lord prayed that we would be one even as He is One in Trinity. He offers to anoint your head with oil to keep away the things that would hinder you from seeing what is before you, or from hearing the truth of His word. In times of difficulty and stress, He will revive your soul.

In a world that loves to rename things and call things that are as if they weren't, we are to look to the Lord in order that He would clear our eyes to see and our ears to hear. Wishful thinking accomplishes nothing. Living in the truth is where true life is lived. Over the past year, I hear that because of the color of my skin, I have been privileged. This blanket statement takes no regard for the particularity of my experience. I have puzzled over this, but I saw something, declared as a demonstration of white privilege, and what I saw was what I once knew as common decency. You know, caring for another human being as Jesus commanded for us to do. Is it that this decency is so rare that now the wicked use it often to segregate? Others may say of me what they will.

Our Lord knows this world. He knows where sin has sent it spiraling down. You may ask why the Lord would allow such things, but can you not see that the purpose, as far as we know, is to make us to be like Christ. At great cost to Himself, He has set this into motion. We may imagine that perhaps the Lord may have chosen to do it some other way, but that is idle speculation. He has chosen to do what He has done the way He has chosen to do it. Rather than chasing down some rabbit hole of speculation, we would be much better off to simply and humbly come into the Lord's will for all things.

What is it the Lord wants? He wants your steadfast love. He wants you to know that He is above all God's. He wants you to walk with the goal of becoming like Christ. Apart from Christ, we are aliens, sojourners on a path to nowhere. Having been reconciled through the cross, we no longer live simply as slaves to this world, for we know, at least in part, what God's will for our lives is. Through Christ, we have access to the Father. In Christ, we grow to become like Him. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we no longer need to be taught to know the Lord, for we have been given the ability to know the Lord.

The foundation of your faith is Jesus. It is not built upon Jesus and some other things, but upon your living relationship with the crucified and resurrected Lord of all. All of those who live by faith are being knit together into the one holy and apostolic church. The communion of saints

is the body of Christ. We each have the unique gifted personality that is being grown in each of us, but also, we are, together, to operate as one body. No longer strangers to the Lord, as we journey together in this increasingly hostile world, we find that it is this world and this culture where we are strangers and aliens. Like many, this makes me sad, but I would rather be a stranger in this culture than to be a stranger to the Lord.

In a very real sense, our modern world is the opposite of what Jesus encountered in today's Gospel. I suppose, though I do not know, that many came to be healed. Did they really want to encounter Christ? Some, yes, but many may have just been there for their own reasons. People have done this with the church ever since. Each comes for their own reason, but we are here for the purpose of Christ. In today's world, people not only stay away from church, many become downright hostile to the faith if they suspect you are one of those religious people.

Mind you, we are all religious people. That's not the problem. They say, "If there is a God, then why did He make rotten stuff in this world." But, you see, the freedom is the very thing that is needed for their to be a living, loving body of Christ. God could have created creatures that could only respond in the right way, but for there to be love, there must be relationship. In order for things to be good, there must be the freedom for what is used for good to go bad. In this sense, there is really no such thing as evil as an originating source. Evil is simply the perversion of what is good. What God created, and that which He declared good, has chosen to go on its own path. In other words, the goodness has been perverted, hence all that is evil. Although God did set this into motion, He is not the one who used good for evil. Humanity has done that all on its own. But it need not be this way.

This is where repentance and coming back to the Lord is so important. I see that many think along the lines that Jesus died for me and so all is well with my soul. But, in fact, there is much that is not as it should be. I not only need the forgiveness which comes by grace, but also the things that caused the need for that forgiveness to be taken out of me. As Jesus said, "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? The leaven of sin needs to be removed from us – every bit of it – lest we take sin with us into eternity and start this whole mess all over again.

Yes, Jesus can heal you of the immediate issues that plague you. He can restore the body to health and youth, but these things are temporary. The real healing is the healing of the soul which is ours through grace. Unless, and only if we completely come into this life which He offers, there can be no life. But when we do walk in the truth of the Lord, He does not make us stretch out to brush His cloak, but turns to embrace us. He wants to call you friend.

We each need a respite from the struggles we all have in this age. We need our souls refreshed. We need the Sabbath. I know there are many who have gotten out of the habit of church. In this entertainment driven world, we need all the help we can get and Jesus offers us all the help we need.

How much more can I encourage you to walk in the gift of this faith which has been given you? What shall I say to encourage you to walk with the only real and lasting hope that there is? What indeed. Spend time with Jesus this week. Be purposeful in praying, not just for things, but that the Lord would take you deeper into the faith He's given you. Know that He who has begun a good work in you will carry it forward to completion. Amen.

This world is temporary

The Lord does not live in a house built with human hands
the house of the Lord is not wood and stone

it is flesh and blood

it is fashion not by hammer and chisel

but through suffering

Jesus is building the house with all who believe

"Destroy this temple and in three days . . ."

The temple of the Lord is where He dwells

He intends to dwell in you

Too often our prayers are those of beggars

supplication - Oh Lord, give me . . .

precation -- Lord, what would you have me do?

1st - with the Lord 2nd - with the body of Christ

Be one as Trinity is One

He anoints your head with oil -- he keeps the parasites from blinding you

The world is screaming privilege

Have they forgotten what we used to call decency

the sum of the commandments to love our neighbor

treat them as you want to be treated

treat all as children of the Heavenly Father

yes, that is privilege

The world is living wishful thinking

we are called to live reality

The world does not care what you have experienced

it calls you what it wants to think you are

The Lord knows you - He created you

the Lord wants your steadfast love

The Lord has set this up the way He has set it up

do not speculate, but live in the revelation He has given you.

Yes, in this modern age, we must begin with repentance

turn therefore and walk in the way of the Lord

He is more than able to complete in you what He has begun

This thing we call church, we need it

if we will not have our soul refreshed, we will continue to slide into the abyss

what we call church is not optional – it is necessary

Be refreshed and walk in the way of the Lord

The Lord will lead you ever deeper into the mystery of faith.