

THEME FOR THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST OCTOBER 18, 2009

MORE THAN A PIT STOP! AIMING FOR GOD'S REST! HEBREWS 4: 1 – 16

How fatigued and “worn out” do you feel, just living each day? Do you find yourself entrapped by the necessity of living life at warp speed while, at the same time, accumulating a financial nest egg so that ultimately, some day, you will be able to rest from the rat race of your life and enjoy the good life of retirement?

God has a much different plan that involves rest – rest in Him! God still holds open His eternal rest plan. May His Spirit show us the way to our Lord's rest plan and lead us to experience, even today, some of the blessings from “resting in Him”.

Introit

Selected Verses from Psalm 116

- L: Let my soul be at rest again,
C: **For the LORD has been good to me.**
L: He has saved me from death,
C: **My eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.**
L: And so I walk in the LORD's presence
C: **As I live here on earth!**
L: I believed in You, so I said,
C: **“I am deeply troubled, LORD.”**
L: What can I offer the LORD
C: **For all He has done for me?**
L: I will lift up the cup of salvation
C: **And praise the LORD's name for saving me.**
L: I will keep my promises to the LORD
C: **In the presence of all His people.**
ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Old Testament Lesson

Ecclesiastes 5: 10 – 20

(A life that is obsessed with wealth – and accumulating wealth – ends up being a meaningless life. God desires that His children be satisfied and enjoy the daily blessings He gives them.)

¹⁰Those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness! ¹¹The more you have, the more people come to help you spend it. So what good is wealth—except perhaps to watch it slip through your fingers!

¹²People who work hard sleep well, whether they eat little or much. But the rich seldom get a good night's sleep.

¹³There is another serious problem I have seen under the sun. Hoarding riches harms the saver. ¹⁴Money is put into risky investments that turn sour, and everything is lost. In the end, there is nothing left to pass on to one's children. ¹⁵We all come to the end of our lives as naked and empty-handed as on the day we were born. We can't take our riches with us.

¹⁶And this, too, is a very serious problem. People leave this world no better off than when they came. All their hard work is for nothing—like working for the wind. ¹⁷Throughout their lives, they live under a cloud—frustrated, discouraged, and angry.

¹⁸Even so, I have noticed one thing, at least, that is good. It is good for people to eat, drink, and enjoy their work under the sun during the short life God has given them, and to accept their lot in life. ¹⁹And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—this is indeed a gift from God. ²⁰God keeps such people so busy enjoying life that they take no time to brood over the past.

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Epistle Lesson

Hebrews 4: 1 – 16

(God still graciously offers His eternal rest to those who believe in His Son, Jesus, who has gone before us to purchase heaven for us.)

¹God's promise of entering his rest still stands, so we ought to tremble with fear that some of you might fail to experience it. ²For this good news—that God has prepared this rest—has been announced to us just as it was to them. But it did them no good because they didn't share the faith of those who listened to God. ³For only we who believe can enter his rest. As for the others, God said, "In my anger I took an oath: "They will never enter my place of rest,"" even though this rest has been ready since he made the world. ⁴We know it is ready because of the place in the Scriptures where it mentions the seventh day: "On the seventh day God rested from all his work." ⁵But in the other passage God said, "They will never enter my place of rest."

⁶So God's rest is there for people to enter, but those who first heard this good news failed to enter because they disobeyed God. ⁷So God set another time for entering his rest, and that time is today. God announced this through David much later in the words already quoted: "Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts." ⁸Now if Joshua had succeeded in giving them this rest, God would not have spoken about another day of rest still to come. ⁹So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. ¹⁰For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. ¹¹So let us do our best to enter that rest. But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall.

¹²For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. ¹³Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

¹⁴So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. ¹⁵This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. ¹⁶So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

The Holy Gospel

Mark 10: 23 – 31

(Jesus reveals His ultimate salvation sacrifice and challenges His disciples to follow His example in unselfish service to all.)

²³Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God!" ²⁴This amazed them. But Jesus said again, "Dear children, it is very hard to enter the Kingdom of God. ²⁵In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!"

²⁶The disciples were astounded. "Then who in the world can be saved?" they asked.

²⁷Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God."

²⁸Then Peter began to speak up. "We've given up everything to follow you," he said.

²⁹"Yes," Jesus replied, "and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, ³⁰will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life. ³¹But many who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then."