

THEME FOR THE TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST NOVEMBER 8, 2009

“FREED FOR HIM!” 1 CORINTHIANS 15: 50 – 58

When we begin to feel sluggish physically, we are likely to run to our physician, hoping to be freed from whatever ails us so that we can go back to living each day with gusto.

This morning we have the opportunity to be rejuvenated with the real hope that centers in our Savior Jesus, who has gone to work to free us from all that controls us. May Jesus salvation rescue move us to commit the new lives He has given us to eagerly living for Him in selfless service.

Old Testament Lesson

Psalm 116: 1 – 17

(A beautiful description of the freedom the Lord provides comes from this Psalm. Themes include mercy, preservation and deliverance – all coming from the hand of our gracious God.)

¹I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy. ²Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live. ³The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish. ⁴Then I called on the name of the LORD: “O LORD, I pray, deliver my soul!”

⁵Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; our God is merciful. ⁶The LORD preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me. ⁷Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you. ⁸For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling; ⁹I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. ¹⁰I believed, even when I spoke, “I am greatly afflicted”; ¹¹I said in my alarm, “All mankind are liars.”

¹²What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me? ¹³I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD, ¹⁴I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

¹⁵Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. ¹⁶O LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant. You have loosed my bonds. ¹⁷I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD.

Epistle Lesson

1 Corinthians 15: 50 – 58

(St. Paul gives us a glorious description of the ultimate and total freedom we will have when our Lord Jesus returns to claim us. He then challenges us to live our lives in light of the certain hope of His return.)

⁵⁰I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

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The Holy Gospel

Luke 4: 14 – 19

(Jesus proclaims Himself to be the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in this section from St. Luke's Gospel.)

¹⁴And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

¹⁶And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”