THE LIVING WORD OF PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
JULY 31 - AUGUST 6

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

Proper 13

Stockpiling material goods and wealth is a greedy way to live. Real, true, authentic life is not about the quantity of possessions.

This is the central lesson Jesus teaches in this Sunday's Gospel text, found in Luke 12:13-21. Instead of choosing to be rich toward yourself, we must learn to be rich toward God and other people. The readings throughout this week are loaded with admonitions against trusting in wealth and warnings against greed.

The preparatory psalm for Thursday through Sunday is Psalm 49:1-12. It warns us that the wicked trust in their wealth and boast in their riches, a foolish decision for those headed to their graves. Psalm 127 also reminds us that unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.

The readings in the wisdom literature in Proverbs 23-24 and Ecclesiastes caution us against the folly of wearing ourselves out to get rich. It is vanity to chase after material gain. True riches are the acquisition of wisdom from God.

Our epistle passages echo these warnings against greed and praise of wisdom. Ephesians 4:17-24 calls us to a new way of life, away from the old futile ways of thinking that are full of greed. Romans 11:33-36 is a declaration acclaiming the "depth of the riches of the wisdom of God."

Colossians 3-4 enjoins us to set our minds on things above, not on earthly things. Paul encourages us to put to death those things that belong to our earthly nature, including greed. Our inheritance is from the Lord we serve.

Where do we find the motivation to live a life of radical trust in God and generosity to others? Hosea 11 is a beautiful recounting of God's neverending compassion for His people. Even though we are unfaithful to God and turn from Him, the LORD does not give up on us. His compassion is aroused for His people. It is God's compassionate care for us that should cause us to trust solely in the Lord.

The two additional Gospel readings in the week are stark reminders from the Lord Jesus about the kind of attitude we should have toward wealth.

In Mark 10:17-22, Jesus instructed the rich young man to sell everything he has and give to the poor. The rich man could not bring himself to relinquish his wealth. "It is hard for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God," Jesus told the man, one of the harder statements Jesus makes in the course of His teaching.

In Luke 12:22-31 Jesus says, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. But seek His kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."

True life is not about the abundance of our possessions, but about living in the reality of the Kingdom. And as we seek the Kingdom, God gives us exactly the food, clothing, and whatever possessions we need. We have everything we need and nothing less.

FOR PRAYER & REFLECTION

In Luke 12:13-21, Jesus tells The Parable of the Rich Fool to a man demanding arbitration of an inheritance that his brother is seemingly withholding from him.

A farmer is enjoying an abundant harvest, one so significant that new barns are needed to store the surplus. The issue is not the farmer's surplus but his attitude toward it. He says to himself, "I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink, and be merry."

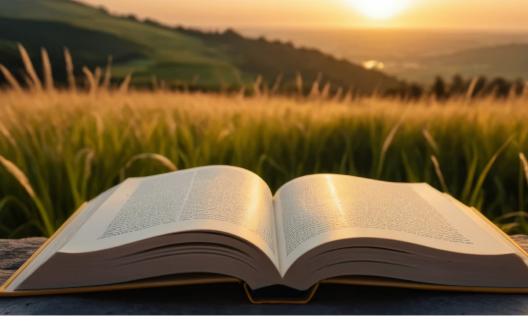
The farmer doesn't demonstrate an attitude of gratitude and thanks. Instead, he appears to be self-satisfied, trusting in his ability to produce. He desires to reward himself with eating, drinking, and merry-making.

God says to the man, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" Instead of being rich toward God, the man was guilty of hoarding his wealth for himself.

Jesus' teaching in this passage comes to Western culture in a stinging prophetic rebuke. Have you visited a third-world country with extreme poverty, only to return to the United States to walk the aisles of our big box stores? We have literal storehouses of food and clothing that could likely feed and clothe the nations. Instead, vast sums of food will end up in the trash while people starve, not just overseas but in our communities.

We should carefully consider Jesus' warning. How much do we need to store up for ourselves? Are there ways that we should be more generous with all of our blessings? After all, whose possessions are they-yours or God's?

The heart moved by the Good News of God's generosity in Jesus cannot, in good conscience, hoard the gifts God gives us out of grace. Are we people who trust in our possessions or those who trust in the God who gives the gifts?



SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday

Psalm 107:1-9, 43; Hosea 8:1-14; Romans 11:33-36

Friday

Psalm 107:1-9, 43; Hosea 9:1-17; Ephesians 4:17-24

Saturday

Psalm 107:1-9, 43; Hosea 10:1-15; Mark 10:17-22

Sunday

Psalm 107:1-9, 43; Hosea 11:1-11; Eccles. 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23; Psalm 49:1-12; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21

Monday

Psalm 60; Hosea 11:12-12:14; Colossians 3:18-4:1

Tuesday

Psalm 60: Hosea 13:1-16: Colossians 4:2-6

Wednesday

Psalm 60; Hosea 14:1-9; Luke 12:22-31

Why do the daily readings begin on Thursday?

The daily readings for each week begin on Thursday and end on the following Wednesday. The Thursday through Saturday readings prepare the reader for the Sunday ahead. The Monday through Wednesday readings reflect on what was presented on Sunday.

The Morning Liturgy

Opening Scripture

O send out Your light and Your truth, that they may lead me, and bring me unto Your holy hill, and to Your dwelling.

Psalm 43:3

Opening Prayer (based on Psalm 51)

Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim Your praise. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of Your saving help again and sustain me with Your bountiful Spirit. Glory 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*.

Scripture Reading (read Psalm and Gospel text here)

Period of Silence

Confessing Our Faith (Apostles' Creed)

The Lord's Prayer

The Collect (Proper 13)

Let Your continual mercy, O Lord, cleanse and defend Your Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without Your help, protect and govern it always by Your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

A Midday Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, You said to Your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you:" Regard not our sins, but the faith of Your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly City, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit You live and reign, now and forever.

Amen.

An Early Evening Prayer

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know You as You are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of Your love. *Amen*.

A Bedtime Confession and Prayer

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy Name.

Amen.

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let Your holy angels dwell

with us to preserve us in peace; and let Your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



