



Come and See!

Week of September 28, 2025, 26 OT

The Word...

“Woe to the complacent in Zion!
Lying upon beds of ivory, stretched comfortably on their couches,
they eat lambs taken from the flock, and calves from the stall!
Improvising to the music of the harp,
like David, they devise their own accompaniment.
They drink wine from bowls and anoint themselves with the best oils;
yet they are not made ill by the collapse of Joseph!”
(Amos 9:1a, 4-7).

“‘I beg you send [Lazarus] to my father's house, for I have five brothers,
so that he may warn them. ...But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the
prophets. Let them listen to them.' He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham,
but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'
Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets,
neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead’”
(Lk 16:19-31).

Pondering the Word...

“Neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.”

I call myself a Christian, and in so claim to believe in Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. And yet, I can be complacent, stretched out comfortably on my “couch.” I don’t even pretend to play a musical instrument but am happy to get lost in listening to others, while enjoying my glass (no, not a bowl!) of wine or treating myself to a spa day now and then. I *am* “made ill” by what I see as a collapse in true Christianity, but does Jesus’ resurrection from the dead persuade me to look closely at my own complacency?

Living the Word...

These readings can be the “squirm in your seat” type for those of us blessed with plenty in this lifetime. But the “sin” here is not wealth; the sin is complacency, apathy, averting our eyes and hearts from the needs of the oppressed. We are seeing more of that as the standards of living decline for all but the very wealthy. “The rich keep getting richer, and the poor, poorer;” *“Rising income inequality, the disparity between the rich and the poor in the U.S., has been growing for decades. In 2021, the top 1% of earners controlled 32.3% of the nation’s wealth, while the bottom 50% controlled just 2.6%”* (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly/2024/05/14/why-the-rich-get-richer-and-the-poor-get-poorer/>).

I know wealthy people who go way beyond acts of charity, striving to right the societal wrongs that drive inequality and need. They are not complacent. They generously share their gifts. And while today’s readings deal with material wealth, we know all our gifts are to be shared. Complacency doesn’t always involve “treasure.” Might this be the week to get off our couches to share our time and talents?

Personal Reflections and Ideas ...

Mon, Sep 29: *"War broke out in heaven...The huge dragon, called the Devil, who deceived the whole world, was thrown down to earth, and its angels with it"* (Rev 12:7-12). One of the many, *many* things that puzzles me: if the Devil was the one who deceived the whole world in the first place, then why was it and its minions thrown back to earth?! Just to deceive humanity again? Or, to give us another chance to defeat it on earth as it was in heaven? **Provision: Resist evil.** Revelation is an allegory, an example of apocalyptic literature popular at the time; there are also historical references from the late first century, CE. It is difficult and distracting to read, but there are clear messages for us today. Evil is a reality. It wears many disguises but will retreat from the light of heavenly love. The best way to defeat it is to love with the mercy of God. How will you "resist" today?

Tue, Sep 30: *"Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down and consume them, as Elias did?" But he rebuked them: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them"* (Lk 9:51-56, KJV). The King James Bible, among others, contains this extra line, a clarification I find insightful, particularly Jesus' comment (in more modern vernacular): *"You do not realize what kind of Spirit you belong to."* **Provision: What kind of Spirit do you belong to?** It's not clear if Jesus' rebuke is calling out James and John's Old Testament view of vengeance (2 Kgs 1:10), or a comment on their lack of awareness about the new Spirit of mercy Jesus preaches. Either way, they are to examine the Spirit within, just as we are. Do we opt for retributive justice which calls for punishment? Or do we belong to Jesus' Spirit of mercy and nonviolence?

Wed, Oct 1: *"I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head"* (Lk 9:57-62). Jesus is an itinerant preacher, traveling from place to place. He's not lamenting the lack of a home but rather explaining to those eager to follow him one of the big costs of discipleship. **Provision: Be a resting place for Jesus.** There are lots of excuses I come up with to distract me from discipleship and from time spent with Jesus. And God knows, my prayer often becomes a litany of intentions. So, one thing I try to do every so often is to create in my heart a place for Jesus to rest his head. Not lamenting my sins and failures as a disciple, not asking him for this and that ...just offering him a warm, open, loving space to rest. His presence within makes the costs of discipleship so much easier to bear!

Thu, Oct 2: *"Do not be sad, do not weep...for rejoicing in the LORD must be your strength! ...Hush, for today is holy, and you must not be saddened." ...for they understood the words that had been expounded to them* (Neh 8:1-12). I imagine these words being said to me: "Don't be sad, don't weep; today is holy. Just strive to understand and rejoice in the Word of God because the Word will be your strength." **Provision: "Today is holy."** There have been days I have been sad to the point of weeping over the violence and vitriol we witness. On those days, God calls me to reflect on the Word, to seek understanding and acceptance of God's unending mercy, despite our many failures. Each day is holy, even as we suffer personal and global loss. Rejoice! God is our strength.

Fri, Oct 3: *"May your compassion quickly come to us for we are brought very low"* (Ps 79). It's happening again. Every year, around this time, I notice the OT readings becoming increasingly ominous. (I don't need the stores to let me know of the upcoming season; I can tell by the readings!) Coupled with Luke's Gospel which can be stark in its prose, and we wind up squirming a bit more in our seats! So, this line from the otherwise disturbing psalm stood out for me today. **Provision: Pray for God's compassion for the whole world!** Not just for me, my family, my community; not just for people who think like I do or worship like I do. For the entire world and all creation—no exceptions. "Lord God, we are brought very low by our lack of compassion. Open the hearts of everyone so we may learn to love each other as you love each of us."

Sat, Oct 4: *"As your hearts have been disposed to stray from God, turn now ten times the more to seek him"* (Bar 4:5-12,27-29). There's a Jewish folktale about a father and son who are estranged. The son makes an overture to reconcile, so the father says, "Meet me halfway on the road." The son is not sure he can come that far, so his father says to him, "Come as far as you can and I will meet you there." **Provision: Come as far as you can.** The prophet tells us to seek God "ten times the more" to make up for the times we have strayed. That might help us with our guilt, but the truth is, God will meet us where we are if we turn with a contrite heart open to mercy. If you are estranged from God, turn around. You will see God right there, ready to meet you and "bring you back to enduring joy."