

October 2021
Ordinary Time
Proper 23



The Diocesan Sunday School Teacher



Welcome

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Greetings My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Our theme for this week is Seeking Good As We Seek God.

We begin with the warning from Amos, that the people of Israel were to seek to do good rather than evil because a time of judgment was coming. The rich had acquired their wealth through cheating and corruption while the poor were denied their rights. God would right the injustices, as all were sent into exile.

Then we meet the rich young ruler who went to see Jesus to ask what more he could do to receive eternal life. Jesus told him to give his wealth to the poor. The ruler left saddened. He was not prepared to participate in God's work of social justice, to care for the poor and the oppressed. He was not willing to give up his money, his power and his position in society in order to stand with the poor. He was not willing to hand control over his life to God.

Jesus said the rich ruler might be first in the world because of his wealth and power, but in the kingdom of God, he and others like him, would be last. Those who are prepared to be followers who give all, including themselves to God, and are obedient to God will be rewarded in the end.

We too are invited to examine ourselves. We must be prepared to give not only our resources but even our lives to Jesus. As we seek God, we will also seek to do the good that God calls us to do.

Blessings,
The Sunday School Team



Collect & Readings

Memory Verse:

Mark 10: 31

But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

The Collect

Lord, we pray that your grace may always precede and follow us, that we may continually be given to good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Amos 5:6-7,10-15
Psalm 90:12-17
Hebrews 4:12-16
Mark 10:17-31

The First Lesson (Amos 5:6-7,10-15)

Seek the Lord and live, or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire, and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it.

Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood, and bring righteousness to the ground! They hate the one who reproves in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks the truth.

Therefore, because you trample on the poor and take from them levies of grain, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not live in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine.

For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great are your sins—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and push aside the needy in the gate.

Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time; for it is an evil time. Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you, just as you have said.

Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

The prophet Amos speaks strongly to those who perpetuate injustice. He warns that there is a consequence for one's actions. He offers the hope that those who seek good and not evil may yet experience God's mercy.

QUESTIONS:

How do you feel when someone treats you unjustly or cheats you? Is it right or fair?

How should we treat those who are weaker, younger, or poorer than we are?

How does God desire us to treat each other?

ACTIVITY:

Write a letter to the nation outlining all the injustices that children and young people face.

Tell the nation how it should treat them as God desires.

Draw a picture that shows injustice on one side, and doing the right thing on the other side.

BIBLE STUDY: Amos 5:6-7, 10-15

God spoke words of judgment through the prophet Amos.

The First Charge: Rampant injustice and trampled righteousness for which the nation of Israel would be held accountable.

Those who dared to speak out, who attempted to champion the cause of the innocent were met with hatred by those who were responsible for administering justice.

An Additional Charge: The guilty were exploiting the poor to enrich themselves. Landowners cheated the poor by making excessive claims of their share of the crop. But their wealth would be of no use when they are carted away into exile.

Those who should have given justice were corrupt. The rich could bribe their way, while the poor could not get a chance to speak, even when they were in the right.

But in the time of God's judgment of exile, all will be silent before God.

But there was one hope for the future: If God's people sought after good, and not evil. God might again draw his people back into life-giving relationship if they would order their lives wholeheartedly in accordance with God's demand for social justice.



Psalm 90:12-17

12 So teach us to number our days * that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

13 Return, O Lord; how long will you tarry? * be gracious to your servants.

14 Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning; * so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

15 Make us glad by the measure of the days that you afflicted us * and the years in which we suffered adversity.

16 Show your servants your works * and your splendor to their children.

17 May the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us; * prosper the work of our hands; prosper our handiwork.

This psalm reminds us of the shortness and uncertainty of human life. As we wait for God's grace and better times, we are to live our lives wisely and do good.

The Second Lesson (Hebrews 4:12-16)

God's Word exposes our hidden sins. Yet God is merciful. Through Jesus Christ, who endured the cross for us, we can confess our sins. God shows us amazing grace and forgives us, for Jesus' sake.

The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

ACTIVITY:

Pray the Collect For Purity
(Book of Common Prayer, page 101)

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your Holy Name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.



BIBLE STUDY: Hebrews 4:12-16

As we strive to live righteous lives so that we too can live in eternity with God, we are warned that God knows the secrets of our hearts.

God is able to cut away the coverings that we use to hide our true selves, motives and actions, and reveal our imperfections, or sins. Thankfully, we have an advocate in Jesus Christ who understands our shortcomings. He reconciles us to God.

As we draw near to Christ and confess faith in him, we too become children of God who can boldly stand before God to seek mercy and grace.

QUESTIONS:

State two things about yourself that no one, or very few persons know?

Do you believe that God knows what is in our hearts?

Do we make mistakes sometimes?

How can Jesus help us to make things right?

Gospel (St. Mark 10:17-31)

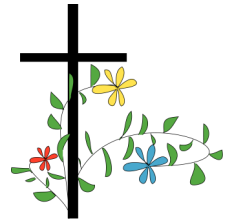
As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

Jesus meets the rich, young ruler who had done all that was ceremonially required for eternal life. Jesus looked into his heart and saw his love of his material possessions. Jesus told him to give it all away, but he went away sad. Jesus challenged his followers to let go of material possessions and people and to hold on to faith in him in order to receive something greater.

St. Mark 10:17-31 Cont.



BIBLE STUDY: St. Mark 10:17-31

The rich young ruler was devout and did all that the law required. He went to Jesus to ask what more he needed to do to receive eternal life.

Jesus wanted to find out what was most important to the ruler – what his heart desired the most. The sadness of the rich young ruler spoke the truth. He loved his possessions, position and power more than he trusted Jesus, and more than he loved God and eternal life with God.

The disciples and others were shocked. If the rich who were considered blessed by God could not enter the kingdom of God, then who could enter?

Jesus pointed out that in God's kingdom, the rich do not inherit eternal life because it is not material wealth that matters. Instead, eternal life requires the surrender of one's whole self in true discipleship.

Those who try to hold on to wealth, position or their loved ones, who seek security and control rather than to surrender all and to be obedient to God, are putting themselves at the back of the line.

Those who are willing to surrender all, and do all for the sake of God, will be rewarded in the end.

QUESTIONS

Do you have a favourite toy or item, what is it?

Could you give that toy or item to a child who has none? Would it be easy to do?

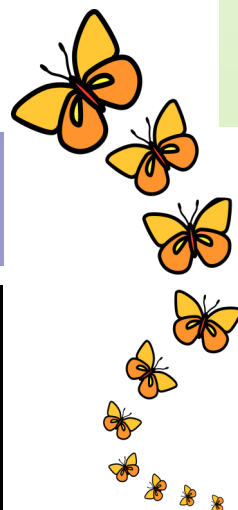
Should we desire God more than our possessions?

How can we show our preference for God?

Activity: Word Search Mark 10:17-31

T	E	S	T	I	M	E	N	T	J	Q	Z	X	M
B	E	Z	X	G	T	R	E	V	E	N	B	N	O
I	S	S	E	L	L	G	R	A	S	S	H	R	T
B	E	S	T	E	R	T	G	V	U	F	G	B	H
L	I	V	E	I	R	I	S	U	S	Z	V	X	E
E	Y	G	V	M	M	H	G	X	Z	L	A	E	R
C	X	Z	B	B	C	O	O	K	E	R	Q	W	C
E	K	S	D	V	O	N	N	N	R	E	N	W	O
S	N	I	F	D	G	O	L	Y	D	Z	F	A	M
A	E	X	X	C	C	R	H	J	K	O	A	O	M
V	E	N	H	N	B	A	G	D	R	A	T	E	A
E	S	U	C	T	G	I	R	G	N	A	H	V	N
D	I	G	I	S	T	E	I	Z	E	N	E	E	D
V	G	Q	R	G	H	V	V	B	R	A	R	O	M
A	N	E	V	A	E	H	F	G	U	C	E	T	E
Y	T	H	A	T	N	A	L	H	S	A	B	H	N
Z	E	E	A	B	X	L	S	F	A	L	S	E	T
E	T	E	R	N	A	L	G	S	E	C	V	B	S
F	G	S	F	C	A	T	L	D	R	O	O	P	Q
Z	R	E	H	C	A	E	T	F	T	F	H	A	F

Jesus Call Commandments Teacher Poor Honor
 Knees Good Testimony Mother Rich Father
 False Sell Treasure Eternal Saved Heaven



We hope you found this newsletter informative and useful.

Please feel free to share it with others.

We extend our thanks to all the persons who assisted in the preparation of this newsletter.

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