

Sermon for July 20th, 2025
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

READINGS

1 Kings 19:9-21

9 There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” **10** He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” **11** And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. **12** And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. **13** And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” **14** He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” **15** And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. **16** And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. **17** And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. **18** Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.” **19** So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. **20** And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” **21** And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

Psalm 16

- 1** Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
2 I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you.”
3 As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones,
in whom is all my delight.
4 The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names on my lips.
5 The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.
6 The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.
7 I bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.

8 I have set the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.
9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.
10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
or let your holy one see corruption.
11 You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written,
“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”
20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Luke 5:1-11

1 On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, 2 and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” 5 And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.” 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. 7 They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Our text for meditation this Fifth Sunday after Trinity is on our Psalm.

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Misery of the Non-believers

Anton LaVey, founder of the so-called “church of satan,” had these last words: “Oh my, oh my, what have I done, there is something very wrong. . . there is something very wrong.”¹ Sigmund Freud, infamous atheistic psychiatrist, here are his last words: “Now it is nothing but torture and makes no

1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nWt_U2gEEI

sense anymore.”² How about the infamous hedonistic journalist Hunter S. Thompson? He wrote in his suicide note, “Football Season Is Over. No More Games. No More Bombs. No More Walking. No More Fun. No More Swimming. 67. That is 17 years past 50. 17 more than I needed or wanted. Boring. I am always [expletive removed]. No Fun – for anybody. 67. You are getting Greedy. Act your old age. Relax – This won't hurt.”³

Of course, there are other nonbelievers who gave final words before their deaths, and not all of them were so dour and painful. Some of them go out with no other expression than screaming in pain as they die from some catastrophic injury. Others go out suddenly, for they were not expecting their deaths: John Entwistle, a musician for a band called The Who, was found dead by the stripper he was shacking up with after he fell asleep and had a cocaine-induced heart attack.⁴ Clearly, we cannot judge a man's emotional state just by how he passes away.

But one thing is for certain. As the Psalmist proclaims, their sorrows multiply. Anyone who runs after another god, whether it is a false religion or a more personal idol like money or sexual perversion, shall find himself absolutely *miserable* both in this life and in the next. There is simply no getting around it, their lives and their eternal fates are not good; so long as they continue resisting faith in Christ, they forfeit any chance of having a happily ever after.

Beloved, be not tempted by the nonbelievers and the apostates. Do not listen to them when they say they are “happier without religion” or trumpeting whatever cult they joined. Even if you see these people partying, having fun, enjoying worldly means like money or fame, the Psalmist tells us plainly that they have their own miseries which will only get worse over time – especially on Judgment Day.

The Joy of the Believer

Truth be told, you have no *reason* to go off into the temptations presented by the wicked. Things may be hard for us here on earth, but they can be for the atheist, the hindu, the muslim, or any other path to hell that people take. The difference is, God has made promises to us which make it all *worth it*. David writes that the Lord is his portion – and belonging to God means having a beautiful inheritance. Don't let the apostate tell you that he or she has “more fun” when trying to get you to slip away from your faith; God promises that at His Right Hand are pleasures *forevermore*. The nonbeliever's fun ends; yours will not, even into eternity.

The joy of the believer is an ever-present facet in life that we should always return to, as the Apostle tells us directly to rejoice always.⁵ But let us remember that this joy is not on account of ourselves. King David writes “you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.” He does not write this about himself, but he writes from the perspective of Christ, seeing as a prophet that our Lord would rise from the dead.⁶ David saw corruption as he slept with his fathers; Jesus Christ rose from the dead before bodily decay could set in.

We might wonder, how does this Psalm preach the hope and joy of the believer if the tenth verse is about Jesus? Sure, Christ rose from the dead and shall never die again – but how does that benefit the believer? Ah, but there is where the Psalmist writes “You make known to me the path of life.” He knew that faith in Christ justifies us; union with Christ means rising with Christ;⁷ He rose from the dead precisely to ensure that whoever trusts in Him for salvation shall be counted worthy to rise again as

2 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/understanding-grief/201704/a-collection-of-last-words>

3 <https://www.gdargaud.net/Humor/FamousLastWords.html>

4 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/stripper-found-entwistle-dead-after-heart-attack-triggered-by-cocaine-135736.html>

5 1 Thessalonians 5:16

6 Acts 2:27, 13:35-39

7 Romans 6:4

well.⁸ And what's more, our flesh dwells secure as the Psalmist says, because Jesus promises that whoever believed in Him *shall never die*.⁹ Even if you shed this mortal coil, death has no power over you; what happens to you is *not* the same as what happens to the nonbeliever, for you are accepted into the arms of our Lord in His Heaven while the believer goes into darkness.

Conclusion

The promises of our Lord were enough for King David to proclaim his diligent allegiance to God forever. No other being in the entire universe could do such wonderful things for a man, to promise that he shall not only live forever, but that he shall live forever with pleasures forevermore. So he declares his loyalty, and so must we. Today beloved, say with the Psalmist that you shall never run after another god; say in your heart that you shall not partake in the infernal rites of the damned; declare to our Lord that you will use His Name rightly and not in vain. And let us then walk in His mercy, in the forgiveness of all our sins, full of joy at both His present blessings and the eternal life to come.

Now the Peace of our Lord, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

⁸ Romans 4:24-25

⁹ John 11:25-26