



WEPC Lectionary Project: *Union with Christ*

West End Presbyterian Church is using the Scripture readings recommended by the Revised Common Lectionary as a framework for our corporate worship and our personal and family devotion. This project is part of WEPC's 25th Anniversary Year and will run from December 2018 through November 2019. The Lectionary gives us access to the whole counsel of Scripture and these texts are a means for us to grow in our understanding of our union with Christ.

To learn more and subscribe to a daily email of Daily Scripture Readings, visit www.wepc.org/lectionary.

Sunday, August 4, 2019

The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost: Ordinary Time

[Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23](#) *What has a man from all the toil ?*

[Psalm 49:1-12](#) *No Life through Riches*

[Colossians 3:1-11](#) *Christ is All, and In All*

[Luke 12:13-21](#) *The Fool not Rich toward God*

Monday, August 5

[Psalm 127](#) *Unless the LORD Builds the House*

[Ecclesiastes 2:1-17](#) *Striving after Wind*

[Colossians 3:18-4:1](#) *Christ, Lord of our House*

Tuesday, August 6

[Psalm 127](#) *Unless the LORD Builds the House*

[Ecclesiastes 3:16-4:8](#) *All Go to One Place*

[Colossians 4:2-6](#) *Walk in Wisdom toward Outsiders*

Wednesday, August 7

[Psalm 127](#) *Unless the LORD Builds the House*

[Ecclesiastes 12:1-8, 13-14](#) *Remember Your Creator*

[Luke 12:22-31](#) *Your Father Knows*

Thursday, August 8

[Psalm 33:12-22](#) *Our Soul Waits for the LORD*

[Job 21:1-16](#) *Why the Wicked?*

[Romans 9:1-9](#) *God's Sovereign Choice*

Friday, August 9

[Psalm 33:12-22](#) *Our Soul Waits for the LORD*

[Ecclesiastes 6:1-6](#) *Yet Enjoy No Good*

[Acts 7:1-8](#) *God Spoke to This Effect*

Saturday, August 10

[Psalm 33:12-22](#) *Our Soul Waits for the LORD*

[Genesis 11:27-32](#) *Ancestors of Abram & Sarai*

[Matthew 6:19-24](#) *Treasures & Masters*

Riches

This week, Steve Shelby preached on Psalm 49:1-15. To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

¹ Hear this, all peoples!

Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,

² both low and high,
rich and poor together!

³ My mouth shall speak wisdom;
the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.

⁴ I will incline my ear to a proverb;
I will solve my riddle to the music of the lyre.

⁵ Why should I fear in times of trouble,
when the iniquity of those who cheat me surrounds me,

⁶ those who trust in their wealth
and boast of the abundance of their riches?

⁷ Truly no man can ransom another,
or give to God the price of his life,

⁸ for the ransom of their life is costly
and can never suffice,

⁹ that he should live on forever
and never see the pit.

¹⁰ For he sees that even the wise die;
the fool and the stupid alike must perish
and leave their wealth to others.

¹¹ Their graves are their homes forever,
their dwelling places to all generations,
though they called lands by their own names.

¹² Man in his pomp will not remain;
he is like the beasts that perish.

¹³ This is the path of those who have foolish confidence;
yet after them people approve of their boasts. *Selah*

¹⁴ Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol;
death shall be their shepherd,
and the upright shall rule over them in the morning.
Their form shall be consumed in Sheol, with no place to dwell.

¹⁵ But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol,
for he will receive me. *Selah*

Unlike most Psalms, Psalm 49 is not so much a poem praising God but “a word to the wise”.

The question: “Why should I fear when trouble comes, when my enemies surround me?” (5)

First, any one of us who puts our trust and hope in material things ends up in the same place as all living things, in death.

The pride of those who rely on their resources will be shown for what it is.

All of us, both successful and unsuccessful, end up in the grave.

So, given this bleak assessment of life, the question remains, “Why should I fear?”

Is the answer, Well, we all die, so it is simply a matter of making the best of it until then?

I maybe poor and oppressed, but my enemies will end up in the same place as me?

So, what is the answer to this? For most of us, the relative comfort of our lives, seems at odds with this Psalm.

Let’s consider America in 2019:

- Deaths of despair (in 6 years 780 million painkillers were sold in West Virginia. The population of West Virginia is approximately 2 million)
- Many of us are terrified of the police. In many places in our country there are neighborhoods and streets where police are terrified to go.
- In the last 24 hours we have seen mass shootings. Richmond is experiencing a spike in violence.
- There are people in our country who can make billions while there are communities that cannot provide all of their citizens with safe water.
- In a typical year the lives of approximately 650,000 of our citizens lives are ended before they ever really began.

So how do I think about this? There is another side to this picture.

“The deepest truth about the universe is that it is animated by love, that it is held together and made to turn by the love of God.

What holds all of this together is a being who is personal and perfect love.” (*Jake Meador*)

We see this in theme of ransom in this Psalm. (verses 8 and 15).

And this is the evidence that we have that there is a personal being who loves us and this world:

“The Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many.” (*Mark 10:45*)

“You were ransomed ... not with perishable things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.” (1 Peter 1:18-19)

We sing “with his own blood he bought her and for her life he died” (*The Church’s One Foundation*)

Jesus Himself is the price of our ransom and redemption.

God ransoms our soul from the power of death (not just physical death) with Himself.