

NOVEMBER 24, 2019-SUMMARY SERMON-JOHN TSCHUDY

SCRIPTURE LESSON DEUTERONOMY 26:1-11, PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9, JOHN 6:25-35

This first text from Deuteronomy should be a basic text for all Christians to learn and hold as central for our faith. Yet many Christians do not see how it applies to us. It goes back to the basic biblical idea that God as Creator of the world, is the true owner of the world and provides all that all of the residents of the world need to live and prosper. It continues with the idea that because of the love of God given to us, both physically and spiritually our offering to God should be given in recognition that all that we have is a gift from God and we need to return it to God with Thanksgiving. In the case of this particular text what God did to the ancestors of the people of Israel, God did for the modern day people. Unfortunately for to many Christians this is a stretch, especially when applied to our physical possessions. But whether it is the things we own or the salvation Christ obtained for us 2,000 years ago, what God has done for those that came before us, God has done for us and we need to give thanks. And we give thanks through our praise, our devotion to obeying God and through returning to God some of the best physical possessions God gave to us in Christ's Name, off the top.

In our Gospel Lesson this week Jesus has returned to the western shore of the Sea of Galilee after feeding the multitude on the other shore. On the next day the crowds that he had fed also has returned to the western shore in search of him. When they find him their biggest interest is in Jesus providing them another meal. Jesus doesn't condemn them for this but he does remind them that their real ultimate goal should not be just surviving but rather living their lives in preparation for eternal life. What is interesting in the exchange is that the people compare Jesus to Moses and wonder what sign he was going to do to prove who and what he is and the value of what he is offering. The day before he had fed them with fish and bread and they were amazed enough to follow him and search for him to feed them again. But yesterday's miracle wasn't a viable sign today. So "What have you done for us lately Jesus?"

Jesus reminds them that it wasn't Moses that was the true source of the Manna on the Exodus, it was God. He is not the source of the meal the day before or the source of eternal life. Rather these are gifts from God, the Creator, the source of all that is. What Moses gave the people on the Exodus met their physical needs for a day. The fish and bread that Jesus gave to them lasted a day and they were hungry again. So it is with the things of this world. But what God is offering them will go on forever and empower them to live their life eternally. For this they should give thanks. Jesus is not the source of this bread, he is the bread. He is a gift from God, so they need to give praise and thanks to God.

According to Paul, recognizing that God is the source of all that is important, so that then we can give thanks to God and praise God for all that God has done for us. And because we can be certain of God's graciousness in providing for us, we should begin all our prayers with thanksgiving to God and praise to God. Then we go on to make our requests to God, knowing that God will provide for us and help us with what we need. I believe too often we miss this key point by thinking God will provide for us not only what we need but also what we want. Sometimes it comes to what we need being something different from what we need and we don't recognize that. But if we accept that difference then we can be at peace accepting what God has done for us and living without the anxiety created by greed and false expectations.

We are to live our lives in the way of God, guided by the truth, honor, representing true justice, and what is pure and brings joy to people and correct. Our lives, our churches, our families and yes our nations are to be led by these virtues. In this way we set the example for all people to follow and create a way that the world can live in peace in Jesus' Name. Amen.