

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Exodus 33:12-23*

- 12** Moses said to the LORD, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’”
- 13** If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.”
- 14** The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”
- 15** Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.
- 16** How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”
- 17** And the LORD said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”
- 18** Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”
- 19** And the LORD said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.
- 20** But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”
- 21** Then the LORD said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock.
- 22** When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.
- 23** Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

PSALM (AND SERMON TEXT): *Psalm 145 (page 119 in Christian Worship)*

- 1** A psalm of praise. Of David. I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.
- 2** Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.
- 3** Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.
- 4** One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts.
- 5** They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works.
- 6** They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds.
- 7** They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.
- 8** The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.
- 9** The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

- 10 All you have made will praise you, O LORD; your saints will extol you.
- 11 They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might,
- 12 so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
- 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.
- 14 The LORD upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.
- 15 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.
- 16 You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.
- 17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.
- 18 The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.
- 19 He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.
- 20 The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.
- 21 My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

EPISTLE LESSON: *Romans 7: 14-25a*

- 14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.
- 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.
- 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.
- 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.
- 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.
- 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.
- 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.
- 21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.
- 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law;
- 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.
- 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?
- 24 Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

GOSPEL LESSON: *Matthew 11: 25-30*

- 25** At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.
- 26** Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.
- 27** “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.
- 28** “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
- 29** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
- 30** For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Dear fellow redeemed and fellow weary pilgrims:

As you grew up, no doubt you enjoyed certain activities with your parents. Many of us who are grown like to look back at those times with fondness. Often, when our parents engaged us in an activity, there was reminiscing. The father who tells his son, “My father took me out for my first deer hunt when I was 12.” “I remember when my father played catch with me.” “I remember when my parents would take us camping.” The ladies may remember other activities: tea parties, visiting with neighbors, card games.

What makes us remember such events? Is it likely that they became memorable because they were not part of the everyday grind? Do we treasure those moments of recreation when we took a break from toils and studies? And have you noticed that those activities you enjoyed growing up you then share with your children, and then they share them with their children, your grandchildren?

King David taps into that generational theme in Psalm 145. In this psalm, King David tells us that **Our Heavenly Father Provides Rest for Our Souls.**

A. *The LORD is good to all.*

B. *His deeds will be told and shared from generation to generation.*

Psalm 145 comes at the end of the book of Psalms. There are actually 150 psalms contained within five books. But these final psalms are psalms of praise. You can almost sense that after the previous 144 psalms deal with our everyday life and struggles and trials and temptations that the psalters decided that the book should finish with peace and rest.

Psalm 145, like Psalm 119, uses the Hebrew alphabet. Each verse is a line where the first word begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet so that, as you read each verse, you can see the alphabet advance down the side of the page. It is often used in English poetry—just this past Fathers’ Day I saw a card that used the letters of the English alphabet to supply 26 attributes of a father. This psalm does the same—only describing the attributes of our Heavenly Father.

The other unique feature of this psalm is that King David alternates between praise of God and proclamation of God’s greatness. It’s like being with your child and saying, “You know, my dad or my mom was great. They would take us out to do this activity when I was growing up.”

But David also stresses the rest we find in our Heavenly Father. In verses 8 and 9, King David states:

*“The LORD is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.
The LORD is good to all;
He has compassion on all he has made.”*

Reading these words, we first have to ask why the LORD even has to be gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. If we listen to modern psychology and the attitudes of many around us, we would think that people in general are pretty decent people. Most of us are law-abiding, we don’t trouble anyone, we break no laws. So why would God even have to be compassionate to us, or even have to slow his anger?

We have to go way back to the Garden of Eden. Here, God had created the world, created a man and a woman, and looked at His creation and saw that it was good. He supplied everything that the man and the woman would need. He gave the man and woman dominion over the whole creation He had just made. There was only *one* thing God asked of this man and this woman: “*Don’t eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*” Pretty simple, right? Well, Satan decided to try out this command. Satan got the man and the woman to doubt God and then ultimately to defy God by reaching forth, plucking the fruit, and eating.

So, sin entered by one man, and death through sin, as St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans. With that sin, God placed curses on the man and the woman. For the man, he would sweat and his work would be less than totally enjoyable. For the woman, she would have pain in childbirth and child rearing. Definitely some wearying curses for mankind.

In addition, God had placed a curse of death on the human race. The body would break down and age. So every person since Adam and Eve have had to consider their mortality. We will all die.

And, just as Satan tempted Adam and Eve at the tree, so he continues to tempt us. He urges us to do things we don’t want to do and know are wrong. What we do want to do, that Satan gets us to ignore and not do. Our epistle lesson today is Paul’s words describing this constant struggle within himself. Each one of us can read Paul’s words and relate to Paul’s struggle. Each one of us has struggles—some with drugs, others with alcohol, still others with depression and self-esteem. There are struggles within a marriage and struggles with singlehood and loneliness. There are struggles in our work environment where we may not feel like doing our best, or take the attitude that our employer is just using us and we’ll be out the door for the sake of the bottom line. Even here at Salem, there is a struggle—either in not getting involved in the ministry to which God calls each one of us or maybe even the other extreme: spending too much time in “doing church business” that we neglect the family God entrusts to us or even our spiritual welfare because, well, we don’t have time to read the Bible or for Bible study. I’m sure I’ve just scratched the surface. The point is, like Paul, we are also wearied from the daily, yes even hourly, struggles in our lives.

But King David reminds us that there is rest provided by our Heavenly Father. Our Heavenly Father is slow to anger. Think about that—*slow to anger*. How often do you or I get irritable, if not downright angry, because of situations, events, pressures, or even challenges in our lives? It’s easy to become angry. But David tells us—*God is slow to anger*.

David also tells us that the LORD *has compassion on all He has made*. Consider those words. In fact, remember them and think about them all day today and all this week—*The Lord has compassion on all He has made*. Those words are a profound statement that tell us about God and how He views what He has created.

Peter saw a vision in the book of Acts. A sheet was lowered and Peter was asked to take and eat. There was a dilemma for Peter. All the animals in the sheet were unclean animals, and Peter said so. But God told Peter, “*Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.*” God was speaking about more than animals and their fitness for food. God was also referring to people—people like Cornelius who God was preparing for Peter to meet. People like us whom God has made. If you believe that God has made you, then also believe that God has compassion on you, has washed you clean from your sins. If you feel that God can’t forgive you because of the sins you have committed, remember this phrase: *The Lord has compassion on all He has made*. Say to yourself, or even write it out and tape it to your mirror: *The Lord has compassion on all He has made*.

God had compassion on us by sending His only Son to be our substitute. You see, to pay for sin, the blood of an innocent man had to be shed. As Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans, “*As sin entered the world by one man, so also the many are saved by the one man.*” That is why Jesus was born in a stable to a virgin, true God born as true man. That is why he lived on this earth for about 33 years, obeying his earthly, sinful parents and preaching and teaching and performing miracles. He had to live a sinless life under His own Law in order to offer himself as our sacrifice. None of us could obey God’s Law perfectly; Jesus did.

Jesus also took our place in the punishment for sin. He died on the cross, with the weight of all our sin on His shoulders. He died that we would live; He rose to assure us of our resurrection.

Yes, we still are wearied by life and the trials and temptations that come our way. And, for many new to their Christian faith, it seems that things get tougher once we know Jesus and what He has done for us. Why can’t it be easier? I mean, we are God’s people, aren’t we? But it’s because we are God’s people that we are tempted that much more by Satan. Satan wants us back and will fight all the harder to get us back.

But God has promised that no one can snatch us out of His hand. And because we are carved in the palm of His hand, we find rest for our souls in His Word. David tells us that **Our Heavenly Father provides Rest for Our Souls.** *Because He is good to all, we pass along this good news from generation to generation.*

There is a reason why we have Sunday school and Vacation Bible School. There is a reason we have programs for children and Christian day schools and high schools. There is a reason we have devotions in our home. For just as we tell our children about what our parents did with us and gave us respite from the daily grind, so also we eagerly share with our children—whether they are biological children, or children in the faith—what our Heavenly Father does to give us rest. For our Heavenly Father makes us his own dear sons and daughters through baptism. He assures us of forgiveness each time we partake of His Supper—in fact, we thank God for giving us this “refreshing gift.” We find rest and comfort in His words—“Come to me, you who are weary.” “It is finished.” “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” “Because I live, you too shall live.” “I am the Resurrection and the Life.”

St. Paul wrote in today’s epistle lesson about his struggles with sin and temptation. He also had other things that wearied him. But he assures us that he considered his present suffering not worth comparing to the glory that would be his in Christ Jesus. That glory is also yours. God has given you that glory by dying and paying for your sins. All too often we cry out like Paul did—*What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?* But Paul does tell who can rescue him and rescue us: *Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Our heavenly Father gives us rest for our souls. We are His own dear children, won for all eternity, purchased with his own blood. Take that rest and comfort for your very own. Share that rest and comfort with a brother or sister, a relative, a friend, a fellow Christian, or someone who doesn’t know yet what their Heavenly Father has done for them. Tell them, “Hey, my Dad died for me. He died for you too. He gives me rest in His word and Sacraments. He offers you that rest as well.”

Amen