



## "Living with Gratitude – Give"

**22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

Saturday & Sunday, November 10-11, 2019  
The Reverend Dr. Jack M. Horner, Jr.  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Job 19:23-27a; Psalm 17:1-9;  
2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17; Luke 20:27-38

Grace and peace be to you from our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

So how will you live on? I have to admit the older I get the more I kind of think about that. How can I extend my life? I am probably not the first one to hit middle age and kind of questions that, I am sure I am not going to be the last. Over the centuries people have come with all sorts of solutions to that question. I could become a mummy, that's what the Egyptians and the Incas did, or perhaps maybe I need to believe in a little reincarnation, popular in some religions. When the Spanish arrived in the new world, they sought out the Fountain of Youth, and then there is always Botox. You know cosmetic surgery used to be such a taboo topic, but now you can talk about Botox and nobody even raises an eyebrow. (laughter) Thank you for that. If you talk to people at other services, wait, what joke? He didn't do that for us. Kind of been hit or miss all weekend.

But if you really think about it, how do we live on except through our children? Those generations upon generations gathered around Thanksgiving tables where we're sharing the stories of ancestors or relative that we've had in the past.

That's one of the issues that's in play with the law that is in Deuteronomy. A widow without a son must go and marry her deceased husband's brother in order for that son to carry on the name. It's also a way to protect childless widows who were unable to inherit property in those days.

But now at the time of Jesus, the Sadducees, a religious group in Israel that didn't believe in the resurrection, they turn it into a question, actually it's more of a trick question for Jesus to answer about resurrection. It's about a widow about getting serial married off to her husband's brothers upon their deaths. And then they ask the question of Jesus, well whose husband is she in heaven? How will the family legacy continue?

So, Jesus takes it as an opportunity not so much to answer that question, but instead to tell them about something of what is resurrection life like? In our first reading Job is responding to his "friend's" taunting, I put that in quotation marks because at this point all of his friends have kind of turned on him as he experiences all of the troubles before him. After he's lost everything, his friends said that he is going to be permanently forgotten for all of his troubles and all of his supposed sins. Slandered by his friends and feeling that his own death is very near, Job decides to affirm his faith in God and to look to the future where his Redeemer and Defender waits.

It's easy for us to praise God when everything is going well. But what about when it's not? What about when life and circumstances beyond our control get in the way? How do our lives carry on and have meaning? What's really important in life?

For Jesus it is all about the power of the resurrection and the life that he represents. Life after all matters to God! What we do here and how matters because we are as Jesus said, "children of God, being children of the resurrection."

Resurrection means that our bodies matter. We're redeemed and given life through God's power.

The Reverend Dr. Luke A. Powery, the Dean of Duke Chapel, puts it this way about resurrection. "Resurrection redeems the way we live on earth as God's children because it touches the earth and challenges the mission of the church to anticipate God's future purposes through concrete action in the direction of God's life-giving future." The goal of life is to live! To live in the fullest! Sharing, caring, giving, investing, making a difference in our world.

Everlasting death has no power with the children of the resurrection. We live because Christ lives! We serve because Christ served. We give because Christ gave his life for us and continues to shower us with blessing and holy purpose.!

And so, Job declares in spite of his trouble, "I know my Redeemer lives!"

The people in your life and my life matter. The woman, discounted in our text today as she goes from husband to disappointed husband for being left childless, matters.

You matter. And your gratitude and generosity for the work of the church in this little corner of God's world matters. Gifts for ministry and God's mission are extensions of your work, your family, your life. And they matter.

Every member of this congregation that gives of their time and talent and treasurers working to accomplish what God's Spirit has placed on their heart's matters. We maintain and improve this property and facilities, a God given asset to serve as a center of our mission, because it's our home, matters.

Pastors, and other staff members of this church and their families are cared for by you as they sacrifice their lives for the church and that matters. It matters that we offer support for people and institutions throughout the country and world by giving away a portion of what we collect in benevolence and mission support. In the last three years alone Trinity has given over \$600,000 to local, national, and worldwide ministry.

The resurrection life Jesus envisioned is one of depth and significance, and the value of life is participating in the mission of God and living that kind of outward thinking missional life. How awesome is that? You and I get to be God's hands and feet in our world today through our work in the church. What we do now, the choices that we make have future implications and God wants our total commitment.

Notice that people never answer the question of what makes their lives valuable when talking about their money or possessions. Those things are the stuff of our lives and might make things a little easier, but they don't give us purpose.

Instead it's our families, our friendships, our partnerships, our laughter, our stories, a walking in the woods or experiences that we have with the people that are closest to us. In God's world, in our world, there are no shortages of faith, hope and love by the Grace of God. Life and its meaning is about getting our lives in sync with our God who created us and loves us. It's about living the best possible life we can have. A life of gratitude and generosity.

And managing what God has entrusted to us is not just a way of life, it's a good way of life that increases our joy and sense of purpose. We give generously because it's a good way to live faithfully to carry on our legacy.

We give because it's a privilege to serve God who has given us so much. We give because it's a delight to see our church thrive in mission and ministry. We belong to God in Christ to live with gratitude and to serve him with everything. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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