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**22nd Sunday after Pentecost
October 24, 2021**

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Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Hail, thou once despised Jesus!

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Thou, whose almighty word

Hymns for 22nd Sunday after Pentecost – October 24, 2021

Hymn 495

Hail, thou once despised Jesus

Hail, thou once despised Jesus! Hail, thou Galilean King!
Thou didst suffer to release us; thou didst free salvation bring.
Hail, thou universal Savior, bearer of our sin and shame!
By thy merit we find favor; life is given through thy Name.

Paschal Lamb, by God appointed, all our sins on thee were laid:
by almighty love anointed, thou hast full atonement made.
All thy people are forgiven through the virtue of thy blood:
opened is the gate of heaven, reconciled are we with God.

Jesus, hail! enthroned in glory, there for ever to abide;
all the heavenly hosts adore thee, seated at thy Father's side.
There for sinners thou art pleading: there thou dost our place prepare;
ever for us interceding, till in glory we appear.

Worship, honor, power, and blessing thou art worthy to receive;
highest praises, without ceasing, right it is for us to give.
Help, ye bright angelic spirits, all your noblest anthems raise;
help to sing our Savior's merits, help to chant Emmanuel's praise

Hymn 656

Blest are the pure in heart

Blest are the pure in heart, for they shall see our God;
the secret of the Lord is theirs, their soul is Christ' abode.

The Lord, who left the heavens our life and peace to bring,
to dwell in lowliness with us, our pattern and our King;

he to the lowly soul will still himself impart
and for his dwelling and his throne will choose the pure in heart.

Lord, we thy presence seek; may ours this blessing be;
give us a pure and lowly heart, a temple fit for thee.

Hymn 371**Thou, whose almighty word**

Thou, whose almighty word chaos and darkness heard, and took their flight;
hear us, we humbly pray, and where the Gospel day sheds not its glorious ray,
let there be light!

Thou who didst come to bring on thy redeeming wing healing and sight,
health to the sick in mind, sight to the inly blind, now to all human-kind,
let there be light!

Spirit of truth and love, life-giving, holy Dove, speed forth thy flight!
Move on the waters' face bearing the gifts of grace, and, in earth's darkest place,
let there be light!

Holy and blessed Three, glorious Trinity, wisdom, love, might;
boundless as ocean's tide, rolling in fullest pride, through the world far and wide,
let there be light!

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, 22nd Sunday after Pentecost, October 24, 2021.

As we noted recently, our friend and neighbor, Clinton Daly, gave to St. Christopher's a handsome wooden chair, worthy of a Cathedral setting. It adds class to an already classy place, this chapel.

As part of this gift, Clinton and I exchanged e-mails. And on his e-mail to me, I noticed the theme of the Brown Advisory Group. Here's the theme: "Thoughtful investing." Not "World's Number One." Not "You can only get more with us." Not "There's no one better." No, the theme of the Brown Advisory Group is "Thoughtful investing." And, as I am apt to do, I said to myself, "There's a sermon in there somewhere." And here it is. Thank you, Clinton.

In today's gospel lesson (**Mark 10:46-52**), we are introduced to a blind beggar named Bartimaeus. He is sitting by the roadside on the outskirts of Jericho. Though blind, Bartimaeus probably had very good hearing. He would pick things up just by listening. So, he was no doubt aware of this man Jesus and his reputation as a healer.

In fact, he may have been sitting intentionally by the roadside hoping that Jesus might pass by. We don't know how long he, Bartimaeus, had been there, but the length of the wait, whatever it was, was an investment. And not just any old investment. It was a thoughtful investment.

In this case, it was an investment of time, yes, but it was also an investment of hope, that somehow this man Jesus could make a difference in the life of Bartimaeus. From the time Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was in town, Bartimaeus might have been thinking of how best to be noticed by this man with a growing reputation as a healer.

Bartimaeus didn't have an investment advisor, as far as we know, so Bartimaeus took upon himself to develop a strategy. And here was the strategy: "When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, 'Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!'" Note the exclamation mark. Bartimaeus had been thinking about this moment for a while, maybe a long while.

When people ordered Bartimaeus to be quiet, “He cried out even more loudly, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’” He was not going to miss this opportunity. He was going to invest his heart and soul and tongue in an effort to be healed.

And, his years of thoughtful waiting and planning paid off. First, those nearby said to Bartimaeus, “Take heart, get up, he is calling you.” And the blind Bartimaeus did just that: “Throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.” And when Jesus asked Bartimaeus “What do you want me to do for you?” Bartimaeus said, “My teacher, let me see again.”

An incredible investment of time and energy and hope and, yes, thoughtfulness, paid off big. “Immediately he regained his sight and followed Jesus on the way.”

Today’s Psalm (**Psalm 126:6**) foretells a big payoff. “Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.”

We are a combination, aren’t we, of tears and joy. And we gather in this place and others like it to process the tears and proclaim the joy. And not just for ourselves and our families, but for the whole Creation.

There is a lot to think about. But we do so in the sure and certain hope that joy outweighs the tears, that Good does defeat Evil, and that we can experience that Victory, not only in the life to come, but in this life.

The prophet Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 31:7-9**) was right all along: “... a great company – the Hebrew people - they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble.”

Does this thoughtful investment of spiritual energy pay dividends? We believe so. That’s why we’re here. If we didn’t like the return on our investment of spiritual energy, we would pursue a different investment strategy.

And, in those moments when we question our commitment, we remember today’s **Collect**: “Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command.”

“Thoughtful investing” is not a one-time event. It’s over time. It assumes that there will be ups and downs, but that, with patience and thoughtful advice, our faith will be justified.” The effort, the patience, the trust, the hope, will be worth it.

Yes, there will be some down-turns, and some adjustments will be necessary. But we will not be alone as we make these adjustments, for we are part of a bigger enterprise, grounded in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the very same Jesus for whom Bartimaeus waited patiently on the roadside. Today’s lesson from the Epistle to the Hebrews (**Hebrews 7:28**) describes Jesus as “the Son - capital S Son – who has been made perfect forever.”

Our lives are our roadsides. It’s what we do on the roadside that makes a difference in the quality of our lives. There are lots of investment options. Jesus is one of those. And here we are. Joined together by a strategy of seeking the Lord’s healing love for ourselves, our families, our nation, and, yes, even our enemies.

This investment at a minimum is thoughtful. We’ve thought about these life and death and everything in between and beyond issues for a long time. Such thoughtfulness is the nature of the human being. The key is “from whom are we seeking guidance?” Who is our Counselor? What are the documents that we should be studying? What are the choices we should be making?

As I have been thinking about “thoughtful investing,” I have been intrigued by the language similarity of religious faith and investment strategy. And one of the keys to both kinds of faith is the investment counselor. Is it any surprise therefore that one of the titles given to the Holy Spirit is Counselor?

Of course, we can carry this comparison to an extreme. Remember the first stanza of our opening hymn today: “O praise ye the Lord! Praise him in the height; rejoice in his word, ye angels of light.” Yes, a successful investment outcome might lead to a grateful handshake with our financial counselor.

But we’re not suggesting that our financial counselor is the Lord. Rather, we are reminding ourselves that, when it comes to the Lord, we need to give thanks for the Lord coming to us. We position ourselves. We listen carefully, and at some point in our faith development, we say to Jesus what Bartimaeus said to Jesus: “Have mercy on me.”

Who knew? A blind beggar as a thoughtful investor. Amen.

Lessons for 22nd Sunday after Pentecost – October 24, 2021

Collect: Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain what your promise, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-9

Thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel." See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them black, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first born.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy.
Then they said among the nations,
"The Lord has done great things for them."
The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.
Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses of the Negev.
Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.
Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

Second Reading: Hebrews 7:23-28

The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel: Mark 10:46-52

Jesus and his disciples came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*