

To Have and to Be

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Saturday, 10 October 2009
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The Lessons Appointed for Use on the Sunday closest to October 12

Proper 23 Year B RCL

Job 23:1-9, 16-17

Psalm 22:1-15

Hebrews 4:12-16

Mark 10:17-31

For the lessons for this sunday click [here](#)

Jesus points out to the young man that he thrust of life eternal is eccentric, the center is out of the self, the center is on the other par excellence, God. By extension, my resources are not within me, or in others, or in what you possess or in the material world, my resources that I can call upon illness, death or tragedy and joy are in God, who is completely, radically different from me, which is ultimately what means that God is holy.

We often see life as a semi-circle, the semicircle of the achievements or failures of the self, the semicircle of the approval or disapproval of those around us, group, society, the semicircle of knowledge or property, resources we have accumulated in our lives, the semicircle of health, strength in youth and decline in old age. A life like this now and here is the only thing taht really matters.

For people who think like this nothing remains of the achievements or failures, fame or infamy or whatever we have, nothing remains of the health or disease. When faced with the inevitable, when faced with the finitude that a life like this implies, this transience of existence, acquiring becomes paramount and the sole purpose of life.

But the orientation of the life that Christ offers, following the metaphor, the geometrical image is a circle. The image of the circle explains a life one whose meaning is beyond the here, but that connects with the here and the now, but it's firmly anchored in the "there" and "tomorrow";.

With this second semicircle from above, from God, our life becomes complete, it does not depend on the achievements of the self, or the approval of the group or what we accumulate in life, does not depend nor even on life and death, but depends on our relationship with God. A life centered on God gives us incredible freedom, because what we do to accumulate experiences, abilities, knowledge will not determine who at the end we are.

Having should always be in function and support of being. A life centered on God gives us an incredible freedom, because in the end what people think of us or not, it means nothing, as long as we do what is right. A life centered on God gives us incredible freedom, because what we accumulate or not does not determine who we are.

Jesus proposes a re-consideration of life, a new perspective eccentric outside the self, the group and the material world to find their center on "high" on the "transcendent" in the "beyond" and not "here" and "now". That's is the meaning of the "born again" that Jesus tells Nicodemus. Jesus gave his life for this, the entire ministry of Jesus is based on this premise, the possibility that despite the abuse in our lives, despite the way we have been damaged, even if sunk in sin we are still pointing upwards, "over there" "towards God", towards wholeness.

It's not about fanaticism, it is not a matter of drinking the Jim Jones cool-aid, is to see life as it is, but from the perspective of God, is not talking more about God in everyday conversation, or coming to mass more often. It is not even being more "religious" is to live with the freedom God promises us in His Son Jesus Christ. The freedom of having a life firmly anchored "up there" rather than "down here".

Then ignorance or knowledge, popularity, or infamy, wealth or poverty, success or failure will still be there and have a limited importance in our lives, but will be dominated by a much larger narrative, which adjusts its real significance.

Christianity is the discovery of that reality more complete, this sacred geometry of life that puts our semi-circle, from death to life, in the context of a circle that has its beginning in God and that to God returns.

The rich young man went away sorrowful, for he did not have the courage to change, but the text says that Jesus looked at him with tender love, in the same way that he looks at you and me when we are invited to walk with Him. A law of human relations says that every encounter between people changes both forever, we do not know what happened after they met. We do not know what happened after the life of the young man who met Jesus, but anyone who is look upon by the Lord Jesus can not remain the same. Jesus himself at the end of the passage, leaves the door open when he says for God nothing is impossible.

In this unlimited possibility of God's grace I rest, when in the midst of my addiction to have, I forget being. In the midst of that grace without boundaries that God extends to all, I rest while I try to put my life with its center "up above", in God. May the grace of God, for whom nothing is impossible cover us all, like the waters cover the sea.