

Trinity 2

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Job 31:13-28

Second Lesson: 1 Cor 13

Homily

Both lessons this morning ask the same question.

What really matters?

What really matters in my own life?

There is one striking feature
that the two passages have in common:
the pronoun, "I".

Both passages are intensely inward looking.

In both of them the speaker is questioning himself,
examining deeply to see if the good in him
really is good, or if he is fooling himself.

Job had just been on the receiving end
of a lot of supposedly good advice
and well-meant criticism from his friends.

What we read this morning is just part
of a long introspective passage
on which he realized that little of what they said
was of any use at all.

St. Paul likewise examines himself,

his own remarkable gifts,
and his motivations,
and finds that only one thing really matters.

Please note very closely that,
although these passages are often used
by preachers who want to criticize others,
that is not their intent.

These are attempts to get it right
within one's own life,
very much in the spirit of Our Lord's word
about the beam in our own eye.

Job, before his troubles,
had been a very rich and a very powerful man,
certainly richer, perhaps smarter,
probably more gifted in many ways
than those around him.

Did he despise them?

Did he refuse to consider their thoughts,
their desires, their needs?

Did he make them feel like trash?

Did he share his blessings with those who has less,
or did he hoard them for his own?

Did he expect to be valued for what he had?

Well, he didn't have all that anymore,
and, as he looked deeply,
realized how horrible such an attitude is,

and said this:

*"If I have ...
Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade,
and mine arm be broken from the bone."*

St. Paul was a man of great accomplishments.
He was highly educated,
and brilliant of mind.
He had been favored with a special appearance
of the Lord Jesus,
and had been anointed as apostle to the gentiles.
He was also, by his own testimony,
proud, headstrong, often difficult,
and could well have become proud of his own gifts,
and of the authority he had been given.

*"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of
angels,"*

he said,
*"and have not charity,
I am become as sounding brass,
or a tinkling cymbal."*

in other words, not only worthless,
but more than a little bit annoying.

Charity, or love,
true selfless love is what he needed,
and this is what it looks like:

*"Charity suffereth long, and is kind;
charity envieth not;
charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
Doth not behave itself unseemly,
seeketh not her own,
is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;
Beareth all things, believeth all things,
hopeth all things, endureth all things."*

It's not what we have,
what kind of possessions,
what kind of education or cultural level,
what kind of intelligence or strength or beauty,
what talents we can use,
how much knowledge we have,
but how much we truly love God
and our neighbor.

As St. Paul wrote:
*"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three;
but the greatest of these is charity."*

I can be perfectly Orthodox in every respect,
every dogma perfectly defined.

I can have the surest hope
of heaven and eternal life,
the firmest trust in salvation in Christ,
butt without the greatest, without love,
it's not real.

Let us pray.

Grant, Lord, that we may hold the faith in truth,
that we may know joyful hope in thy promises,
but above all that all our thoughts and all our deeds
may flow from the love that is thy nature,
and that we may show forth true charity all our days.
To thee, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be all honor, glory, and majesty, now and ever.
Amen.

Trinity #

Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Deut 20:1-9

Second Lesson: Luke 9:57-62

Homily to be written

Morning Prayer C

First Lesson: Gen 6:5-8, 13-22

Second Lesson: Matt 24:32-42

Homily to be written

Trinity 2

Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: 1 Sam 20:1-7, 12-42

Second Lesson: 1 Pet 1:17-25

Homily

*"...all flesh is as grass,
and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.
The grass withereth,
and the flower thereof falleth away: ..."*

Life is a fleeting and undependable thing,
isn't it?
Early in the Twentieth Century,
a magazine ran a contest,
it was searching for a short and simple sentence
which would be true in every circumstance.
The winning entry was so good
that it became an often quoted proverb:

"This, too, shall pass away."

The proverb usually is taken to give comfort
in the midst of difficulties one cannot endure,
but it cuts the other way also.
Not only the evil, but also the good things of earth,
come to an end and pass away.

David had an honored place at the King's table.
The King's son was his best and closest friend.
He married the King's daughter.
He was one of the King's best military leaders,
and also the King's favorite musician.
and, though he talked little about it,
he had a promise
that one day he would be King himself.
You might say that he had it made

Jonathan was the King's first-born son.
He had great love and complete trust for his father.
His brother-in-law David was his best friend,
a friendship so deep and strong
that all other friendships are measured by it.

A wonderful story, but ...
This, too, shall pass away,
like the withering of grass and flowers.
You heard the story:
the sudden reversal,
the King's intense anger with David,

his desire to kill him.

Jonathan couldn't believe that of his father,
but it was true.

The softness was ended.

David had to run for his life.

Very soon Jonathan died in battle.

All gone -- all passed away,
and that could have been the end of the story --
but was it?

Well, we know that David went on
to become a great king,
to become the author of most of the Psalms,
to be the ancestor of Our Lord and Savior.
Though he sinned often and greatly,
he was called by God,
"a man after my own heart".

What marked him in that way?
Meditate on Psalm 51,
the Psalm written after the worst of his sins:

*"...I acknowledge my faults,
and my sin is ever before me.
Against thee only have I sinned,
and done this evil in thy sight.*

*...thou shalt purge me with hyssop,
and I shall be clean;
thou shalt wash me,
and I shall be whiter than snow
...Make me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me ..."*

David knew he was a sinner.
He hated that he was a sinner.
He talked about it with God,
asking forgiveness,
asking for a change of his heart,
and for a change of his life.
Though it was centuries before Jesus' birth,
and death, and resurrection,
it was by that life and sacrifice
that David, like all the faithful,
was saved by Christ, who was, as St. Peter said,

*"...manifest in these last times for you,
Who by him do believe in God,
that raised him up from the dead,
and gave him glory;
that your faith and hope might be in God.
Seeing ye have purified your souls
in obeying the truth through the Spirit
...Being born again,
not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible,*

by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. "

Everything passes away,
both the good and the bad
"But the word of the Lord endureth for ever"

We can endure the hardness that comes upon us.
We need to hold loosely to the good we receive.
None of it lasts,
But our God endures forever.
His promises never fail.
If we accept them and follow Him,
they are ours.
If we do not, they are not.

Let us pray.

Since it is of thy mercy, O gracious Father, that
another day is added to our lives; We here dedicate
both our souls and bodies to thee and thy service, in
a sober, righteous, and godly life: in which
resolution, do thou, P merciful God, confirm and
strengthen us; that, as we grow in age, we may grow
in grace, and in the knowledge and love of our Lord
and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Trinity 2

Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: 2 Kings 4:8-17

Second Lesson: Luke 14:12-24

Homily to be written

Evening Prayer C

First Lesson: 1 Sam 3:1-18

Second Lesson: Acts 7:44-8:4

Homily to be written