

St. James' E-pistle

Date of Sunday Service: July 22, 2018

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Pulpit Notes

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I got into an uncharacteristic comment argument with a high school friend the other day. It was uncharacteristic because we almost always agree on most things. I had shared a meme (sort of an online editorial cartoon) about the amount of money Jeff Bezos now has in income and assets.

The amount is a staggering \$150 billion. The meme noted that a portion of that one individual's wealth could essentially end extreme hunger (through direct food donation as well as the purchase of enough equipment and irrigation, the implementation of sustainable practices and education) - and still leave him with at least \$20 billion.

The argument erupted because my friend assumed this meant I was advocating taking all of Bezos' wealth. I was not and am not. I suspect he can easily afford to pay higher taxes than he does, but that was not the point. The point I was making is that this world has a lot of needs, and there is more than enough wealth in the world to address them. However, over the past 40 years or so, the concentration of wealth into the hands of a few has upended the balance that once existed, and extreme poverty has grown exponentially over that time. At last check, roughly 82% of the world's (and it's similar in our nation) wealth is held in the hands of one tenth of one percent of the population.

Moreover, the mood of the country is not sympathetic to the poor. We have a sense that the poor just don't work hard enough. That the rich, on the other hand, do deserve what they get because they work hard, invest well, take risks. Yet as little as a generation ago, this was not the prevailing American attitude where helping one's neighbor was considered mandatory.

How does this affect us as Christians? Jesus said a lot about wealth, didn't he? At the same time, he never neglected the rich. He sat at table with rich and poor alike, teaching us that all people are God's children worthy of our love. Nevertheless, he warned about the spiritual risks of wealth. "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." The rich man sat in the flames of hell while poor Lazarus rested in Heaven. "For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also." "You cannot serve both God and money."

You get the idea.

So, when I got into the conversation about money with this friend of mine, I did not intend to say (as he thought) that we should take anyone's money and redistribute it by force. That would never work anyway. I *did* intend, however, to incite friends to consider their relationship with wealth. And this, of course, goes hand in hand with our relationship to the poor. Extreme poverty is growing in

the US at an alarming rate (an agency originally established to provide health care in developing countries found that they needed to set up a program in the south and Midwest).

Those of us who have are called by Jesus to remember that we are merely stewards of that money, that nobody gets to the top without the help of others. We are called to be cautious in our relationship with money lest it own us. And we are called to be the help to others who are struggling to make it. You can choose how you give, but keeping hold of wealth and saying, "Mine!" is not good for the soul.

I'm not sure what direction the country will take with regard to taxation and incentives for the super rich. But I do know that one of the ideals forwarded over and over by scripture is that of care for the UNrich. The ideal in the Kingdom of God is one of mutual care where possessing was far less important than relating. Or, as St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."

I know issues of money and wealth are not fun summer reading, but they are issues we are called upon to consider each day.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck +

SUMMER PLEDGE APPEAL: We are in full summer mode now, and that means travel. It also means it's easy to forget your pledge. This is your friendly reminder to keep up with your pledge so your St. James' family can keep up with the work God has given us to do together. If you have yet to pledge for this year, it's never too late! God is good, and so is your partnership in the Jesus Movement.

Announcements

Music Reminder:

This summer we've-introduced a little Taizé music to St. James'. We began with the Communion Hymn, which is the Taizé song, "Nothing Can Trouble." Taizé is known for its brevity - just one or two lines - but also for being repeated over and over. So, the song will be sung throughout communion; don't worry, you'll know when it ends. We will sing this song for communion every Sunday in July. That way you won't even need to think about it by the second week, and you'll be able to come up to communion still singing.

Between Service Classes:

On the **Sundays of July** we have a series on the 7 Deadly Sins. Last Sunday we explored Greed and Lust. This Sunday, we will explore **Envy** and **Wrath**.

Youth Group:

Sunday, July 22 at 3:00 PM! Hope you can come. We are putting up a banner in the front yard.

Acolyte Training:

Because of scheduling conflicts, we are rescheduling acolyte training. It will now be Sunday, July 29 after the 10:00 AM service. If *you* would like to become an acolyte, please let him know.

LAY READER Training:

As promised, there will be a training session for all Lay Readers, currently licensed and those who would like to be, for **Saturday, July 28 at 9:00 AM**. It will last no more than three hours and explore all the areas that are important to fulfilling this ministry. If you can't make this date but still want to get licensed (or renew your license) Fr. Chuck will set an alternate date for September. Please note: according to diocesan rules, all lay readers who bear the chalice must be licensed. This class should fulfill requirements for licensing.

RURAL AND MIGRANT MINISTRY:

Request for School Supply Kits

Rural and Migrant Ministry will be offering a variety of summer youth programs. This year these programs include summer day programs and an overnight camp that will be held the week of August 12th at the Presbyterian Camp in Holmes, NY. These programs make a huge difference in the lives of the young people who attend and often, these experiences are life-changing. This year's theme is *RESISTANCE*.

One of the most needed items for each child that participates in RMM's summer programs is a Back to School Supply Kit. Last year our parish family donated thirty-eight kits.

Please prayerfully consider making a donation of a school kit. The kit should include 4 composition notebooks (NO spiral notebooks), 4 Sturdy (2) pocket folders, 1 package of notebook paper, 1 box of primary colored Crayola washable markers, 1 24-count box of Crayola crayons, 1 soft pencil envelope/case that includes 1 package (12) #2 pencils, 1 eraser, 1 pencil sharpener, 1 ruler, 3-6 ball point pens, 2 glue sticks, a pair of school scissors and a small package of construction paper.

or if you would like us to do the shopping, please prayerfully consider making a cash donation. Cash/Checks payable to St. James' Church, memo line - RMM school supplies. Special Offering envelopes can be found in the pews or in the narthex of the church.

Deadline for donations: Sunday, August 5, 2018

On behalf of the campers who will benefit from your donation: **THANK YOU!!!**

Deacon Gail on behalf of the Outreach Committee

July 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
15 Between Service Class	16 Office Closed	17 7 PM Vestry	18 10 AM Morning Prayer 2 PM Hyde Park Assisted Living	19	20	21 8 AM Men's Breakfast
22 Between Service Class Youth Group	23 Office Closed	24	25 10 AM Morning Prayer	26	27	28 Lay Reader Class
29 Between Service Class Acolyte Class	30 Office Closed	31	10 AM Morning Prayer			
<p>Sundays: Holy Eucharist Rite I is at 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite II (with music) is at 10:00 AM. Sunday School and nursery are available at 10:00 AM. Between Service Classes on Sundays are from 9:15 to 9:45 in the Wilks Room.</p>						

Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:

Please pray for these diocesan ministries this week. If you want to check out the entire year's calendar for intercession, it's simple to find - go to

<https://www.diocesenyn.org/administration/for-clergy/liturgical-and-sacramental/diocesan-calendar-of-intercession/>

- 22 The Trustees of the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine
- 23 St. Simeon's Church, Bronx
- 24 St. John's Church, Arden
- 25 Trinity Preschool, Manhattan
- 26 St. Anne's Church, Washingtonville
- 27 The Canon for Pastoral Care
- 28 Pastoral Counselors and Therapists of the Diocese

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Ashley, John Bohlmann, Helen Braun, Darlene Calgagni, Mariel Carter, Joanne Clark, Linkin Ewalt, Loretta Falzarano (sister of Donna Beyer), Heather Francese, Kathy Ganim, Brian Ganter (deployed to Afghanistan), Karla Givison (Deb Belding's sister), Gloria Golden, Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Ashley Konyn, Tedi Kramer, Hope Jennings, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Jim Lynn (Carol Bender's brother - facing surgery), Doris Mack, Margaret, Andrew Mendelson, Beth and Ginero Milano, Lillian Peralta, Mary Bowers Peters (stroke), Grace Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, Rob Robinson, Jason Rodino (serving in Afghanistan), Pat Rooney, John Ross, Hank Schroeder, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Carl Smith, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Georgia Verven, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

Schedules

A Note about Schedules: The names you see below are those listed on their respective schedules. There are often times when, due to sickness or travel, substitutes are asked to fill in or trade positions. This will probably NOT be reflected in the lists below—so, if there is an inconsistency between what you see here and what you see on Sunday, that is all right.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Birthdays
(this past week): | Taylor Triola, Rick Schroeder, David R. Bender and William Ardini |
| Birthdays
(this coming week): | Barbara Hobens, Georgianna S. Pardee, Patricia Glancey, Barbara Soden, James Matranga, Clarence W. Clark, Nick Granados-Kramer, Clifford Wells and David Wardell |
| Acolytes: | July 22: Deirdre Mae
July 29: Kirstin |

Altar Guild:	July 22: Team I July 29: Team II
8 a.m. Readers:	July 22: Deb Belding and Jim Smyth July 29: Deb Belding and Deb Belding
10 a.m. Readers:	July 22: Wendy Urban-Mead and Deirdre Mae Micker July 29: Wilma Tully and Judy Douglass
Ushers:	July 22: Andrew and Tanya Hall July 29: Judy Douglass and Vince Asher
Pledge Clerks:	July 22: Andy Hall and Dean Caswell July 29: Doug Belding and Judy Douglass
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	July 22: Cathy, Aric and Andrea Tegtmeier; Geoff, Charlessa, Jasmine and Jaylen Thatcher July 29: Jodi, Dave, Taylor and Travyn Triola, Jim Truitt, Wilma Tully
Coffee Hour Hosts:	July 22: No Coffee Hour July 29: No Coffee Hour

This Week's Lectionary

2 Samuel 7:1-14a
Psalm 89:20-37
Ephesians 2:11-22
Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

This Week's Hymns

Processional: 645 - The King of Love My Shepherd is
Sequence: 663 - The Lord My God My Shepherd Is
Offertory: L136 - I have Decided to Follow Jesus
Communion: Taizé (insert) - "Nothing Can Trouble"
Recessional: 691 - My Faith Looks Up To Thee

Last Week's Sermon

Sermon Preached on Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

“The Dance of Death”

My grandmother thought dancing was the work of the devil, so my parents never danced much, and we certainly *never* did it in her presence.

Granny belonged to a conservative church that thought the devil used dancing to put impure thoughts into people’s heads - and other areas. And their evidence? Well, just look at our lessons today - dancing leads to death!

Or does it?

You know what we need to do, don’t you? We need to take a little deeper dive into them.

Let’s start with David. The background for this story starts many years earlier (in the days of the judges) when the Ark of the Covenant is stolen by the Philistines. That doesn’t work out for them because as soon as they get the ark to their homeland, bad things start happening. So they return the ark with a peace offering, and it ends up in the care of a man named Abinadab where it stays for 20 years.

After David is made King, he decides to go bring the ark to his new City of David, otherwise known as Jerusalem. He has 30,000 men with him, and they are all dancing wildly in the Spirit. But then, one of the people in charge of the ark touches it inappropriately and dies. David is both angry at God and scared. So he parks the ark at the home of a guy named Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months. [scholars debate whether Obed-Edom was a Levite or a gentile follower of God, but for our purposes today, it doesn’t matter].

The funny thing is, the moment he becomes the caretaker of the ark, Obed-Edom has tremendous good luck with everything he does. Everything is going his way. David hears about this and decides he wants that action, so he gets the ark and finishes bringing it to Jerusalem.

As he’s dancing, his wife Michal looks out a window, sees him, and despises him in her heart. She openly mocks him.

David will have none of it. “I will dance, he says, because the Lord moves me to.”

Now let’s jump to the gospel. There we have the death of John the Baptist. Granny would have said his death was caused by the wayward dancing of that minx daughter Salome. I know the reading says her name is Herodias, but Herodias is the name of Herod’s wife, and while the girl could be Herodias, Jr., the passage can also be translated “the daughter of Herodias.” The ancient historian Josephus gives her the name of Salome, and Granny would definitely have used that name.

If you ever see the old movies like *King of Kings* that have the death of John, Salome is portrayed as some 20-something seductress who teases her father-in-law. But the word used to describe her is the same word used to describe Jairus’ 12-year-old daughter whom Jesus healed (remember a few weeks ago?). So, this is a kid.

Mostly likely, Herod and his buddies have been drinking, and the girl was expected to entertain - as children of royalty regularly were. Nothing unusual other than Herod wanting to impress his guests and making a lavish promise. The girl has no idea what to ask - so she asks Herodias for advice.

And voila, dancing leads to death!

For David, it was the death of a marriage. For Salome, it may have been death of innocence. For John, of course, it was actual death.

But what if the dancing had nothing to do with any of it?

In David's case, there are a lot of reasons Michal already hated him: She was given to David as a prize by her father, the then King Saul. David defeated Saul in battle - a battle in which Saul and her brother Jonathan were killed. David might not have loved her - and, she may well have been jealous of even the servant girls whom David danced in front of.

In Salome's case, it seems likely her dancing was child-like (the same word is used by Jesus when he describes children engaged in playful dancing). The problem was her step-father's drunken promise.

The point is, it wasn't the dancing that caused anything - it's just the dancing that gets blamed. And I mention this because all too often in this life, we blame the wrong thing for the disasters of our lives.

Want an example? Look in the news where you see examples of women who are assaulted. One of the first questions they are asked is, "What were you wearing?" As if that had any bearing on anything.

Or the numerous stories in the news these days of young black men having the police called on them for doing normal everyday things. This past week alone there was the story of the 92-year-old Mexican man who was beaten up for being an illegal alien (he wasn't), the Puerto Rican woman who was assaulted for wearing a shirt with the Puerto Rican flag, the 11-year-old black boy who got the cops called on him for mowing a lawn that wasn't his (he was starting a lawn-mowing service).

It's not the activities themselves that are problematic but the people around them. All too often we use something innocuous as an excuse to abuse others - all too often, we allow that abuse to shut us down, both on the outside and on the inside.

That is, we allow them to make us stop dancing - or singing, or dressing however we want, or mowing lawns ... And we allow it to dampen our spirits, our souls, so that we are afraid to truly live life fully ever again.

The lesson of today's stories - at least what I'd like you to take away - is to keep dancing. If your dancing is an expression of God's joy, keep dancing. If your singing is an expression of God's love, keep singing. If your clothing is an expression of your true self, wear your loud clothing. Mow your lawn, walk with your head up.

Don't let others close you down inside. God is with you, and as long as you are living as a witness to God's love within you, however others perceive you is their problem. Don't let it stop you from doing right.

Warning - if there's a uniform you need to wear at work (or uniform behavior to keep) - wear it & keep it. That's different, of course. AND don't YOU blame others' dancing.

So go out and dance. I think even Granny looking down from heaven would approve. Amen

A WORD ABOUT RECORDED SERMONS:

Most weeks, I upload a recorded copy of the sermon onto my Facebook page as well as St. James' YouTube channel. I have not yet figured out how to upload them to the St. James' Facebook page but am working on it.

You can also listen to sermons by going to YouTube (www.youtube.com) and searching for "St. James Episcopal Church, Hyde Park, NY". There, you will not only find sermons, but also videos of the Fireside Chats and other videos of interest. You can subscribe to that page, and then when new content is uploaded, you will receive a notification.