

## PENTECOST 8C - COMMENTS/QUESTIONS ON THE LESSONS FOR AUGUST 3, 2025

### Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23

- This is the only time in the three-year lectionary that we hear from Ecclesiastes. The book is said to be written by “the Teacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.” (1:1) Because of that verse, it has been attributed to Solomon, though we do not know who actually wrote it.
- Among the early church fathers, Ecclesiastes was seen as the second step (beginning with Proverbs and ending with the Song of Solomon) in a three-step progression toward true wisdom. As a first step, Proverbs offers practical advice for an orderly and reasonable faithful life. As a second step, Ecclesiastes shows that even order and reason will fall short in view of the reality of death. As a third step, the Song of Solomon leads us into a spiritual union with God. Thus, we hear the cry that is repeated throughout the book: “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.” We do not hear the ultimate conclusion of this lament until Ecclesiastes 12, when the Teacher will declare: “Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come, and the years draw near when you will say, ‘I have no pleasure in them.’” (12:1) When faced with despair and the lack of meaning, the Teacher throws himself back into the hands of God.

### Psalms 49:1-12

- Read in light of the passage from Ecclesiastes, a common theme emerges: Death comes to us all. Death is the great equalizer of all people. This theme is continued in the rest of the psalm:

<sup>16</sup> *Do not be afraid when some become rich,  
when the wealth of their houses increases.*  
<sup>17</sup> *For when they die they will carry nothing away;  
their wealth will not go down after them.*  
<sup>18</sup> *Though in their lifetime they count themselves happy  
—for you are praised when you do well for yourself—*  
<sup>19</sup> *they will go to the company of their ancestors,  
who will never again see the light.*  
<sup>20</sup> *Mortals cannot abide in their pomp;  
they are like the animals that perish.*

- How does death or the approach of death affect how you live your life?

### Colossians 3:1-11

- It is important to hear the next verse in Colossians: “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.” (3:12) Paul presents two different lists: a list of traits to get rid of **and** a list of traits to clothe ourselves with:

*Greed  
Anger  
Wrath  
Malice  
Slander  
Abusive language from your mouth*

*Compassion  
Kindness  
Humility  
Meekness  
Patience*

As you look at these two lists, which trait is harder for you to get rid of? Which trait is harder for you to “clothe yourselves” with? What can help you?

- What does it mean to you to be “renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator”?
- Notice in verse 11 how this renewal breaks down any division that we construct. What divisions need to be torn down in our church today? In our community? In our country? In our world?

### Luke 12:13-21

- In our materialistic world, these words of Jesus hit us uncomfortably. What is our relationship with money and material goods? What is our relationship with financial security? How do these words challenge us or unsettle us?
- What does it mean to you to be “rich toward God”?