



# Come and See!

Week of September 11, 2022

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## The Word...

"So the LORD relented in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people."  
*(from Ex 32:7-11, 13-14)*

"My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;  
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn."  
*(from Ps 51)*

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Of these I am the foremost. But for that reason I was mercifully treated, so that in me, as the foremost, Christ Jesus might display all his patience as an example for those who would come to believe in him."  
*(from 1Tm 1:12-17)*

"I shall get up and go to my father."  
*(from Lk 15:1-32)*

## Pondering the Word ...

The theme that resonates with me today is "returning."

The Lord turns back from his anger. The psalmist returns to God with a sincere, contrite, and humbled heart. Paul sets himself as an example of how Jesus will reach out to even the foremost sinner to bring them back to God. And of course, the wayward son returns to his father who welcomes him with open arms.

God always welcomes us back, no matter how grievously we have sinned, no matter how many times, no matter how many ways. God's love never fails.

*Come to me, you who are burdened—with suffering, with sin—and I will give you love and rest.*

## Living the Word...

"Ok," you might say, "I believe God can forgive me. But how do I forgive myself?" It took me a long time and the shock of two startling revelations to come to my senses about this: One, the inability to forgive myself is nothing but the sin of pride. "I SHOULD be better than that! Oh really? Why? Why do you think you are any better than anyone else?" And two, thanks to the wisdom of Søren Kierkegaard, if I truly believe God has forgiven me and I still can't forgive myself, I place myself on a higher throne than God! (Yes, it took me awhile to get over the guilt I felt about that!)

I use this quote often, but it resonates as well: "*We meet God most fully in the realm of mercy*" (Metr. Anthony Bloom). We meet God in the realm of mercy as God most desires to meet us. If you are turned away, turn back. Read psalm 51 in its entirety. Return to God with all your heart. God is waiting with open arms.

Personal Reflections and Ideas ... \_\_\_\_\_

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**Mon, Sep 12:** *“When you meet, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper, for each one has his own supper, while another goes hungry. Do you show contempt for the Church and make those who have nothing feel ashamed?”* (1Cor 11: 17-26, 23). The Corinthians are having trouble getting the hang of this new practice of sharing a meal. Paul chastises them for fostering division in the community. Instead of sharing, less fortunate members of the young church are ostracized and feel ashamed. Can you imagine? In church, no less! **Reflection/Provision:** Ask yourself: Do we need to do some soul-searching in our church communities? We say all are welcome, but are all invited as equals? Can all share in the meal? Do we deny the sacraments to those whose life situations don’t quite match up to what we think is acceptable? I wonder what Paul would say to us? I wonder what Jesus would say?

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**Tue, Sep 13:** *“God has visited his people”* (Lk 7:11-17). Jesus is moved by great compassion and gently restores the deceased son to his widowed mother. Of course, everyone glorifies God. Everyone is amazed. Wouldn’t you be? **Reflection/Provision:** When you hear about breakthroughs in the realm of science or medicine; when you hear of stories of people doing incredible things to help those suffering from disaster, are you amazed? Do you think, *“God has visited his people?”* Perhaps you have done something out of great compassion to alleviate someone’s suffering. Do you glorify God? Jesus told us, *“You will do even greater things than these”* (Jn 14:12). Take time today to praise God and to stand in wonder before the Lord who enables us to work miracles!

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**Wed, Sep 14:** *With their patience worn out by the journey, the people complained against God and Moses* (Nm 21: 4-9). **Reflection/Provision** We get worn out by our journey too. We get tired of the same old thing. We hunger and thirst for something better, something new. It may seem from this reading God doesn’t want to hear our complaints, but I don’t think that’s the point. After all, if you listen to the psalms, you’ll hear lots of lamenting! But you will also hear hope. You will hear the psalmist affirm God’s power and seek God’s mercy. Bring your misery and woe to the Lord. Just make sure to bring along your faith as well.

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**Thu, Sep 15:** *“Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel...and you yourself a sword will pierce so the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed”* (Lk 2:33-35). Scholars say this verse hearkens back to Zechariah 12:10: *“And I will pour out on the house of David...a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly as one grieves for a firstborn son.”* Mary’s sorrow will be felt by all who doubted, and yet grace—the grace that allowed Mary to stay true to her “yes” — will be poured out so we can return from our fall and seek God’s mercy. **Reflection/Provision:** Go back to our reflection from Sunday. Mourn, grieve, and then let grace be poured onto you. Allow Mary’s faith to strengthen and comfort you.

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**Fri, Sep 16:** *“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain;... If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all”* (1 Cor 15:12-20). **Reflection/Provision:** When I read this passage, I think about the story from Daniel 3 about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: *“If our God whom we serve will save us, let him save us. But even if he will not, know, O King [Nebuchadnezzar] we will not serve your god.”* Their faith in God is so strong, their reliance on God’s will so profound their situation is of no matter. They live their salvation. *“If for this life only we have hoped in Christ...”* are we really pitiable? Is our faith in vain? Or are we blessed that we are given the grace to live Christ’s message here on earth? I understand what Paul is saying, but I believe there is joy and salvation right here and right now. The Kingdom of God is among and within us. Let’s live that way and rejoice!

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**Sat, Sep 17:** *“As for the seed that fell among thorns, they are the ones who have heard, but as they go along, they are choked by the anxieties and riches and pleasures of life, and they fail to produce mature fruit”* (Lk 8:4-15). **Reflection/Provision:** I tend to ignore something in the verse: I focus on riches and the pleasures of life as being the thorns that choke and inhibit my spiritual growth. I overlook anxieties as being the things that distract me, keeping me from producing mature fruit. As I go along, I get wrapped up in the concerns of everyday life, in the state of our society and the condition of our earth that I forget to bring these valid worries to God for comfort, hope, and courage. I don’t allow God to feed the seeds of faith within me, so despite the thorns and the weeds, I can rise above the fray to provide good, nourishing fruit for others, to actually make a difference in the face of anxiety. When you do your examen in the evening, look back and see how often anxiety blocks out the Light. Be aware as you go about your day tomorrow to return to God for God’s help to grow and flourish amid the worry.