

Sermon for 9 November 2025 @ Bethesda UMC/Baltimore

Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

Scriptures: Haggai 1:15b-2:9; Psalter(*Insert, alternate leader/people*)Psalm 145:1-5,17-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17; Luke 20:27-38

Sermon: As we come to the third and final year of our three-year lectionary of Bible lessons, our theme gets tighter. God loves us, we rebel and fall short, our beautiful creation story falls apart... and then God's love retrieves the theme, and in one way and then another, the good news continues.

The psalmist echoes the Prophet Haggai's promise, "My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever."

Our tradition is much older than worship following a page of writing. These words, these stories, are from memory, and our reciting them, alone and together, never ends..

Paul the Apostle tackles the problem that some believers had died and Jesus hadn't made his promised return. "Keep living right and it will happen," he tells the believers in Thessalonica.

These are all useful verses ,, but today's Gospel lesson once again has Jesus stepping out of tradition and making more moral and spiritual sense than his pious religious critics. What do you think about his answer to the Sadducees? (*Pause here for response*)

Isn't that what we're seeing a sign of in the recent elections? Didn't we start as a democratic society by rebelling against England? Isn't that a hopeful sign? We must correct and renew our style and substance of living. We thank God for signs of that growing this past week.

Surely, telling truth about what we know pleases Heaven more than speculating about marriage in that sphere!

Let us pray. Dear God, teach us how to criticize ourselves and our society more than we have. Thank you for these records of debate between Jesus and the leaders of his time. Thank you for the Spirit that comes and dwells among us, both here together and on our individual paths. Inspire us to keep going, no matter what. Give us the light of love in our own souls, so that we may treat all like our Lord Jesus. Keep us on the lookout for new ways to use our resources. Open our doors and our hearts to expand your influence more and more. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.