

In my head  
And in my heart  
And all around me, God is here.

Good Morning  
It is a joy to be with you all.

The lessons and Gospel all share a common theme. That doesn't usually happen. And luckily there aren't any of those verses of scripture that leave you wondering what the heck God was trying to say.

I particularly am delighted that the Lesson, Psalm, Epistle and Gospel all have a fairly upbeat message. It may not seem like it at first, but they truly are full of wisdom and joy. They remind me of advice a parent or a kind mentor would give you:

For instance Jeremiah can be boiled down to "Bloom where you are planted."

In the Psalm we are encouraged to tell those we love that we love them. In this case it is God. Don't think that God doesn't need to hear the words "I love you" any less than we do.

The Gospel. This is so basic. Never fail to say thank you when someone has done something nice for you like cured your leprosy.

And finally, a little family dynamic is thrown in. Be nice you to your Uncle Timothy when he comes over for dinner. Sure he can get a little cranky/wacky when it comes to women speaking in church and all that but "don't wrangle over words and ruin each other's listening capabilities. Sometimes pearls of wisdom drop from Uncle Tim's mouth and you won't want to miss out.

Not only is there wonderful advice this week but it comes when we need to perhaps take a time out from the frantic activities of the world and do some holy thinking.

Remember these words of the poet Mary Oliver who asks us:

**...what is it you plan to do**

**with your one wild and precious life?**

Hopefully your answer is to not squander it. To live it to the glory of God. To be a light unto this world that feels at times like it is slipping into unbearable darkness. Believing that through God all things are possible.

This life we have. This gift...Let's fill it with merriment and gratitude to God. Let us be happy where we are and not always assume that the grass is greener elsewhere.

And let us not wax nostalgic or pretend that past was perfect. That the olden days were worry free. That people were better to each other "back then."

We know that isn't so.

Just as we know that many insidious social ills continue to infect our society. Racism, homophobia, misogyny – they are still with us. They still continue to divide us. The good news is that the generations coming up behind us want nothing to do with these ills. Universal understanding will prevail that love is love.

No, take this time to strengthen your gratitude. Sing the glory of God's name. He will not allow your feet to slip.

In one of his poems, Rainer Marie Rilke asks "But all the violence and horror in the world – how can you accept it? And then the poet answers: I PRAISE.

*Amen*