

*Homily for Wednesday May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018*

One day a certain rich man who lived a miserable life visited a rabbi. The rabbi took the rich man by the hand and led him to a window. "Look out there," he said. The rich man looked into the street, "What do you see?" asked the rabbi.

"I see men, women, and children," answered the rich man.

Again the rabbi took him by the hand and this time led him to a mirror. Now what do you see?"

"Now I see myself," the rich man replied.

Then the rabbi said, "Behold, in the window there is a glass, and in the mirror there is a glass. But the glass of the mirror is covered with a little silver, and no sooner is the silver added than you cease to see others, and you see only yourself."

Every person has a perspective, what is commonly called a "world view". Our world view is often aligned with that which we deem to be most important. In our story the rabbi is pointing out how when silver governs the way we see the world, we end up often being self-absorbed and miserable.

Today's psalm speaks of the self-absorbed this way:

*those who trust in their wealth  
and boast of the abundance of their riches*

The key here is the word "trust". Those who trust in their riches see everything through the prism of wealth. This word "trust" is used repeatedly in the Psalms. It means:

*"To confide in or to set one's hope and confidence upon."*

So to trust in their wealth means to set one's hope and confidence upon riches. When we do this our psalm offers a dire prognosis:

*Truly, no ransom avails for one's life,  
there is no price one can give to God for it.  
8 For the ransom of life is costly,  
and can never suffice,  
9 that one should live on forever  
and never see the grave*

To have a perspective seeing everything through the glass laced with silver is the myopic world view because it is self-pre-occupied.

What is the world view that broadens our horizons so we can see out the window? It is to trust in the Lord.

It is worth noting that the psalm we are considering this morning is Psalm 49. This is the first time in the Psalms where the word trust is associated with wealth. Previous to this usage the word trust is used over 20 times and the object of the trust is always God. Here are two examples. The first is from Psalm 33:

***Our heart is glad in him,  
because we trust in his holy name.***

The second is from psalm 40:

***<sup>4</sup>Happy are those who make  
the LORD their trust,***

Did you capture the attitude of those who trust in the Lord? Glad hearts, and happy lives. This is not the fleeting happiness offered to us by the world and its fading charms. No this is the deep rooted happiness that allows us to say with St. Paul in 1 Timothy 6:

***we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; <sup>8</sup> but if we have food  
and clothing, we will be content with these.***

James in today's first reading says something similar but in more stark terms:

***Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that  
appears for a little while and then vanishes.***

Last evening I was walking in the park near my home. Since the weekend the crab apple blossoms have come alive, the trees resplendent with their May glory. Within a couple of days their beauty will fade and they will be gone.

I think this can be an apt metaphor for a God centred life. When we live with the perspective of James and learn the way of simplicity we will be forming a world view that allows us to ponder what is of real value. Although in relation to the eternal God we appear for a little while and then vanish, our lives can have the kind a vibrancy evident in May blossoms.

The Rabbi understood where happiness was found. A world view that sees everything through the glass of trusting God rather than the mirror that trusts in wealth and the fleeting attractions of this world.