

The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost August 1, 2010

Welcome to St. John's Episcopal Church. In today's liturgy we are confronted with the radical shift in our values brought about by our union with Christ in Baptism. In the Gospel reading, Jesus is asked to settle a property dispute between two brothers. Instead he warns against placing our highest value in material acquisition, for that value is a fleeting and uncertain one. The highest value must be placed on our relationship with God, which alone is permanent and certain.

In the Old Testament reading we have the wise reflections of a person who found that spending one's life and commitment on the accumulation of material goods is, in the end, an empty and ephemeral project. It is "vanity and striving after wind."

In the passage from Colossians, Paul describes the new way of living which belongs to those unified with Christ in Baptism. As people who have put on the new nature, our behavior toward others is transformed; our relationships with others are no longer based on human values or differences; and our lives consist of joy, peace, forgiveness, and thanksgiving.

When, we present to God the work of human hands in bread and wine and gifts of our material possessions, we are placing our lives into a new and transforming relationship with God. Our relationship toward the material world is likewise transformed. We are put right in our relationship with God, with others, with ourselves, and with the material world. Then we are sent out to live in that new relationship each day.

From *The Rite Light: Reflections on the Sunday Readings and Seasons of the Church Year*.
Copyright © 1998 by Michael W. Merriman. Church Publishing Incorporated, New York.