

The Seventh Sunday after Trinity

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Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0:00] One of the struggles and sins that people battle today stems from a state of mind called acedia.

! Acedia means to be without care or concern. It's sometimes called spiritual sloth. A person suffering from acedia means they experience intense dread, boredom, burnout, or an overall lack of purpose and meaning in life. There's no magical cure, no pill, that will enable people to get over this feeling of acedia. Many of the early monks called acedia the noonday demon. Today, acedia can be extremely intense in the evenings or mornings, which brings about a feeling of meaninglessness in life, an attitude of what's the point anyway.

This feeling of aimlessness or having no purpose is growing. It's a growing problem in our culture. The more we are physically disconnected from others, or as we try to compare ourselves to others by way of social media, the deeper we feel alone, without true purpose in life.

One of the best pieces of advice came, as I was reading about this this week, from a priest who struggles with acedia. He also works in campus ministry, helping college students who deal with similar thoughts and feelings. And this priest tells his students to do the opposite, to do the opposite of what they normally do when dealing with this lack of purpose and meaning.

So instead of scrolling on their phones, he says they should seek to engage people in conversation physically, looking at them eye to eye. Instead of using food to self-medicate, they should go on a walk or do some manual labor. Instead of looking at porn, they should seek to spend time meditating on scripture and praying for others. And the list goes on. Doing the opposite of just sinking into apathy and a lack of purpose can be the action needed to snap us out of our struggle.

[2:41] But why am I saying all this? Well, I assure you it's not because I'm trying to give you self-help tips this morning. I'm the last person that should be doing that. This whole discussion, however, is related to our epistle text that we heard here in Romans chapter 6. St. Paul speaks about the need to put away our former life that creates a loss of identity and purpose. So listen as I reread this, a portion of our epistle reading from Romans chapter 6.

For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness and of lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members, and that language of members means your body, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

Now having been set free from sin and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness and the end everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. St. Paul says that we were, we were slaves to lawlessness and uncleanness.

He says the telos or the end of such a life is death, for the wages of sin is death. But he then goes on to say, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[4:18] So what is this gift? And how do we receive this gift that frees us from a life of lawlessness, uncleanness, which is rooted in a lack of meaning and purpose?

Well, we know the gift is eternal life. But how do we receive this gift of eternal life? It's being united to Christ, which happens in holy baptism.

Listen as I read the opening words of Romans chapter 6, which by the way, was our reading, our epistle reading from last Sunday, because it gives you the whole context of what we heard again this morning.

Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we were buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, so that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

[5 : 41] So let me help you connect the dots here this morning. St. Paul says we were slaves to sin, living in lawlessness, which brings about death.

But Christ came to break the chains of sin and death by taking our sin and also our death upon himself. That's what the cross is all about.

He conquered death, being raised from the dead. Therefore, we were baptized into him, into Christ, where our old life was drowned and it died.

Our old life was put to death in Christ. Being united to Christ means we have been raised with him to live differently.

Now having a hope and purpose in life. Christ rose from the grave and as baptized children, we have been raised with him.

[6 : 39] And this radical transition and transference from death to life is not only our current reality, which it is, it is also to be our aim and purpose as we make our way in this life.

We are to live our lives no longer being enslaved to the misery and the fatalistic despair of this world. Instead, we are now to be servants of God in all that we do, and that is the freedom.

That is the freedom that brings hope and purpose in our lives. It gives us a purpose. A seedy is a state where we turn in on ourselves, refusing to see the light and the love of God.

Why? Because we're being catechized by the world, and so our whole mindset is about what the world is telling us. A seedy is a state of being bored with life.

A seedy is a state of refusing to see the good and the beautiful. A seedy breeds apathy and an attitude of not caring about anyone or anything.

[7 : 54] But having been baptized into Christ, we share in his life, not only his death, but now his resurrection. Therefore, we are children of hope, and therefore we are to put our time and energy into living as free people, from such aimlessness, by striving with the purpose of serving God, and also serving others.

A purpose in life is this, what we say every Mass, love God and love neighbor. And such a life does not mean we will always experience rainbows and unicorns.

But what it does mean is that even the crosses that we bear in this life, we bear with the hope of the resurrection, which we participate in now.

But it's also that light and promise which shines upon the horizon as we anticipate that life everlasting.

Such a life is one that is concerned with growing in holiness and righteousness, using such affliction, such difficulty as a means for growing, growing in the grace and the likeness of our God.

[9 : 15] As St. Paul says here in our epistle reading of Romans chapter 6, verse 22, that now having been set free from sin and having become slaves, that is, servants of God, you have your fruit to holiness and the end everlasting life.

Striving to grow in grace and in holiness is to be our primary aim and goal of our lives, which enables us to get beyond the sin of acedia because apathy, boredom, and a lack of meaning are now replaced with resurrection, hope, and purpose.

Therefore, dear people of God, let us be servants of God, growing in his holiness and righteousness through the good and especially through the bad times, rejoicing, rejoicing in the resurrection and life, which is yours in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.