

**“A TIGHTROPE WALK: IN, BUT NOT OF THE WORLD”**  
**Jer. 17:5-8; Lk 6:17-26; 1 Cor. 15:1-20**

Imagine a tightrope walker. They must navigate a precarious path, maintaining balance amidst the swirling winds and the dizzying heights below. This, I believe, is a fitting metaphor for the Christian life. Christians navigate two distinct realities: the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God. They are deeply different – in their values, their goals, and even their very understanding of what it means to be truly blessed.

The world we in which we currently live is temporary, fleeting. The kingdom of God is eternal, known not through sight, but through the firm belief in God's promises. This can create tension, as the values and goals of these two realms often clash.

Every Christian navigates this delicate balance. We're called to engage with the world, without being consumed by it. We're to recognize and appreciate the good gifts God gives us – relationships, possessions, achievements – while remembering that our ultimate hope and security is in Him.

This is a constant and challenge requiring discernment, intentionality, and a willingness to continually re-evaluate our priorities and attachments.

And when the world's values and perspectives seep into our very being, changing our thoughts and priorities, we're find ourselves in grave danger. As Jeremiah warned in our Old Testament Reading this morning, ***“Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord.”***

We're constantly bombarded with the world's seductive promises and distractions. They subtly shape our minds and hearts, often without our awareness. To the extent that we might find ourselves questioning God's word, or doubting His ability or His willingness to act.

Our first parents, Adam and Eve serve as a reminder of the consequences seeking fulfillment in the world. We've inherited their fallen condition, constantly wrestling with the allure of the world and the call to live according to God's design.

The promises of men can be unreliable. What we believe to be true today may be proven false tomorrow. When we place our trust in human endeavors and material possessions, we build our lives on shifting sand. These things are constantly shifting, subject to change and leading to disappointment as they fade and lose their shine.

Even the most brilliant minds among us are ultimately mortal. Death silences their voices, and their legacies can be distorted or even erased as the world's understanding changes and what was once celebrated may later be condemned.

It's not just the words of men that are fleeting, but the material things we cherish. Possessions deteriorate as moth and rust destroy, fashions change, and what once

brought us joy can quickly lose its appeal. Our values and priorities shift, and what seemed important yesterday may appear trivial tomorrow.

Perhaps “off balance” best describes the experience... and this is what the enemy wants—to sow doubt and disorientation. He wants you to question everything: truth, meaning, purpose, identity, and ultimately, your eternal destiny.

The reality of death looms over us all, and sooner or later, our earthly life comes to an end. This inescapable truth can be a source of great anxiety, leaving us to wrestle with questions of meaning and purpose.

Satan tempted Adam and Eve with the promise of worldly power and knowledge, but instead delivered despair and confusion. He offered them life, but ultimately brought about death. This tragic fall has left its mark on humanity, shaping the world in which we live today.

While the path of worldly trust leads to despair, there is another way. Again, Jeremiah reminds us, **“Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord.”** But he also offers a resounding hope: **“Blessed is the man who trusts IN the Lord, whose trust IS the Lord.”**

You see, even within the fallen world, a different **WORD** emerged – a word of truth, hope, forgiveness, resurrection, and ultimately, salvation. God, in His infinite mercy, didn’t abandon us to despair. He promised to redeem and restore creation.

And so, even amidst the chaos and suffering, Adam and Eve embraced this divine **WORD** experienced profound blessings. They found joy in the midst of life's triumphs, such as the birth of their children... and solace in the face of their deepest sorrows, as one of their Children (Cain) killed his brother (Abel).

They were living in two realities – the one they had created through their own choices and the one God was actively restoring. They lived by experience and by faith.

When the **Word of God became flesh** in Jesus Christ, a new era began. The promises of God that He would send one to **crush the serpent’s head**, were fulfilled. Jesus demonstrated this power through miraculous healings, casting out demons, and restoring life. He brought the kingdom of God to earth, offering freedom from sin, death, and the dominion of evil. This was a tangible demonstration of a new reality, a kingdom of hope and restoration.

This new kingdom was radically different from the earthly kingdoms of this world as Jesus wasn’t interested in establishing a new political or social order. His miracles were not merely displays of power, but **signs** pointing towards a deeper reality – the coming of a new creation, a resurrection from the sin and death that grip this world.

Jesus entered a world marred by sin, death, and the grip of evil. He willingly bore the weight of our sins, enduring suffering and death on the cross. He then descended into hell, conquering sin and death itself.

This victory is evidenced by His empty tomb. It declares that His life is eternal, His promises are sure, and He has the power to provide all that we truly need.

As the Apostle Paul emphasized today in our Epistle, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is absolutely central to our faith. ***If Christ has not been raised from the dead, if His tomb is still occupied, then our faith is meaningless.*** We would be left adrift in a sea of uncertainty, without a sure foundation or a hope that transcends this life. Without the resurrection, we are left to cling to a fragile reed in the face of life's inevitable challenges which overwhelm us.

But the resurrection of Jesus changes everything! Paul himself could point to hundreds of witnesses who saw the risen Christ. This victory shatters the grip of despair and confusion that Satan seeks to impose on the world.

In a world of uncertainty and shifting truths, Jesus offers a firm foundation, a rock of unwavering reality. He's the ultimate authority, the one whose words hold absolute power. His resurrection, a victory over death itself, provides us with a secure anchor in a world where so much feels uncertain.

When life throws you off course, Jesus offers stability. When doubt and confusion assail you, He offers unwavering truth. When you stumble and stray from the path, He offers forgiveness and restores your relationship with Him. And ultimately, when death claims your earthly life, He offers the promise of resurrection—eternal life beyond the grave.

True blessedness comes not from worldly success or material possessions, but from a deep and abiding relationship with God. It's experienced not just in times of ease and comfort, but also in the midst of suffering – poverty, hunger, grief, and persecution. Blessed are the poor...those who hunger and thirst...who mourn...and are persecuted... says Jesus in our Gospel today, because in those moments, we're reminded of God's unwavering presence and His promise of eternal life.

The world, is ultimately fleeting and unreliable. Jesus warns us against placing our trust in these passing things that will ultimately fail us.

True blessedness comes when we are BAPTIZED into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through baptism, we share in His life-giving victory over sin and death. True blessedness comes in the ABSOLUTION where we experience the healing power of forgiveness, cleansing us from the stain of sin. And through the HOLY COMMUNION, we receive nourishment and strength from the very source of life, drawing sustenance from the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

The reality of living in two such vastly different kingdoms—the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God—is that blessings and curses can coexist. The crucial question becomes: *Which kingdom will you ultimately choose to prioritize? Which will guide your decisions, shape your values, and ultimately determine the course of your life?*

This is not an easy path. But true blessedness belongs to those who trust in the Lord, even when that trust is tested. They trust in the one who endured unimaginable suffering – the beaten, bloodied, and crucified Jesus. Yet, this suffering was not in vain. Because in Christ, we find not only empathy when we, too, are beaten and bloodied and live the cruciform life, but also because the promise of resurrection is sure.

When the world inflicts pain and suffering on us, we aren't alone. Jesus, who walked this path before us, walks with us now. He offers us the assurance of ultimate victory, a life that transcends the limitations of this world and extends into eternity. In every circumstance, in joy and sorrow, in triumph and defeat, we are blessed because we are united with the Blessed One, now and forever. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.