

**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

The Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany (C)

Gen. 45.3—11, 15      Ps. 37.1—12, 41—42      1 Cor. 15.35—38, 42—50      Luke 6.27—38

**Genesis 45.3—11, 15**

1. The lesson is from the culmination of the Joseph saga, the point at which Joseph reveals who he is to his brothers.
  - a. Joseph's "test" has come to an end, on the basis of the profound change he has witnessed in his intended murderers.
2. Joseph now reveals his plan to the brothers, that his plan is part of the LORD's plan for the salvation of His people.
  - a. His injunction to his brothers to hurry is given because of his understanding of God's plan.
    - i. What providence supplies may not be simply considered as "interesting", but requires acceptance and action.
3. Upon the revelation of the plan, it is really only then that Joseph actually fully greets his brothers.
  - a. The participation in God's plan is made in conjunction with the forgiveness made in God's Name.

**Psalms 37.1—12, 41—42**

1. This psalm is a Wisdom psalm, composed in Hebrew as an acrostic, which reminds us that the righteous are blessed.
2. We are to take our delight in the LORD, and fret not if the wicked prosper (as they very often do!) in this world.
  - a. Faith in God leads to real blessing, which transcends this world.

**1 Corinthians 15.35—38, 42—50**

1. The lesson is taken from the section in this letter (15.33-49) in which the apostle is focused upon the resurrected body.
  - a. Paul engages in the rhetorical technique of *diatribe* (literally "through struggle/testing"). The questions posed are, therefore, actually objections.
    - i. If nothing can be said about the risen body, it is pointless to talk about resurrection.
    - ii. The central question is, "With what sort of body do the dead come [to new life]?"
2. The realities to which we apply the terms "flesh" and "body" may not be the only realities to which these terms may be applied. The terms are not univocal.
  - a. The example of the plant (vv. 36—38) is that the plant emerges in a body which is different from that of the seed.

3. Paul answers the question posed at v. 35 by transforming four negative qualities of the present body into positive qualities.
  - a. The contrast made between Adam (earth) and Christ (spirit) reverses the order described in Gen. 1–2 (the two creation stories, of a heavenly creation and then of an earthly one).
    - i. Paul is contrasting his revelation to the teaching with which the Corinthians are familiar, *e.g.*, as taught by Philo of Alexandria (a Neoplatonic philosopher).
      1. Adam and Christ each represent a possibility of human existence. In the reality of the resurrection we participate in the reality of Christ, who is the last “Adam” (*cf.* Rom. 5.12–21).

### **Luke 6.27–38**

1. Jesus is teaching in Luke’s parallel (the Sermon on the Plain) to Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount.
  - a. The present verses contemporize for Jesus’ audience what He has just taught about blessings and woes (vv. 20–26).
  - b. The message is addressed to would be disciples (“you that listen”).
2. Jesus provides details about how disciples are to respond to persecution. The teaching is radical, flying in the face of the natural human instincts of self-protection.
  - a. Another pattern of conduct is to replace that of instinct. We are called to be something more than what we are.
3. The Lucan account radicalizes what Matthew has described.
  - a. Mtt. 5.42: “give to the one who begs” becomes universal.
  - b. Mtt. 5.42b: “do not turn away a person who wants to borrow from you” becomes “do not demand your possessions back from the person who takes them”.
  - c. Giving is not to be motivated by any concern for reciprocity; it is to be of the self.
4. The image of a lap overflowing with a cascade of grain points to God’s superabundance in blessing. The possible meanings of blessings and woes are illustrated for would be disciples.