

Second Hand Preacher

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 28, 2016

Hebrews 12:18-19,22-24a

Do you ever think about the day you are going to die? I know it is a bit of a morbid thought, but as they say death and taxes come to us all. Most of us hope that loved ones will be there. Even though it is impossible to control, we hope they are comforted. Then comes the big question; what happens next? Will it be judgment, purgatory, Heaven, or an alternative that we as Christians don't want to fathom? Having a strong relationship with Jesus and treating others as we want to be treated are some of the building blocks of our salvation. I don't believe God wants us to spend a great deal of time worrying about our future, but hopefully we end up living as an intentional disciple.

These are questions the author to the Hebrews wrestles with. Approaching Mount Zion seems to be a sign of entering eternal life. Fire and gloom are part of the equation. Darkness is part of the reality the author describes for the earthly life. The Hebrews certainly want to be part of the heavenly Jerusalem. In their lives as Jews, they sought the earthly Jerusalem as it was considered a very holy place. It was the duty of a good Jew to make it there for the high feasts. Now this is the place of judgment by God. We do not stand alone for this judgment; we have Jesus as the mediator. This is because of the blood he shed. The blood speaks more eloquently than that of Abel.

The cross is never far away. The blood shed by Jesus is the means for our salvation. In order for the Hebrews to understand, they compare it to the blood lost by the first to die in Genesis. Jesus died for us once and for all. In our day, we have the witness of the martyrs both ancient and modern who by persecution follow in the footsteps of the Lord. Most of us will not face baptism by blood. We can die to self and be hopeful for eternal life. Just as the author to the Hebrews longed to speak of Heaven, we in the modern day exist for the hope of Heaven.