



# Come and See!

Week of September 14, 2025, 24 OT

## The Word...

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him might not perish  
but might have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,  
but that the world might be saved through him"  
(Jn 3:13-17).

## Pondering the Word...

*"God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."*

These words, which I have heard hundreds of times, hit me between the eyes today. I am quick to condemn. And yet, I recall other words I have heard hundreds of times: *"Just as God has sent me, so I send you"* (Jn 20:21).

I have...you have...we have been sent, not to condemn but to save through love. A much harder task, I'd say.

## Living the Word...

Let's think about this: condemning versus saving. Is it an "either/or" or could it be both? I struggle when I listen to Jesus condemning the Pharisees as we heard in Matthew 23 during "hypocrite week." Jesus uses very strong language in condemnation, so how do we reconcile this? Some scholars point to what we will read this Tuesday in Paul's letter to Timothy about those in leadership being held to a higher standard; clearly, there is Old Testament and gospel precedence for this. I'm sure somewhere in the thousands of papers written on this very subject there is a theological answer that would make sense to me, but let's take a stab at it anyway.

The reason God chose to become human is to save us from our humanity. "Save" is the important word here, the main goal. So, what happens when Jesus encounters people and practices that work not only against his mission of salvation, but leads people in the opposite direction? Jesus' words and actions give us the answer. Nothing, not even death, will keep him from the mission for which he was sent. Saving us from our humanity, by definition, necessitates calling out hypocrisy. And of course, we know he welcomed and blest those elders willing to see and to learn (Mk 12:34).

Two things to consider: first and most important is that "beam" in our eye we talked about last week. We cannot condemn another without taking a good, hard look at ourselves. Second, although we may condemn a person's words, values, or actions, judgement is the Lord's, not ours. But we know those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and justice are blessed, so if we believe we have been sent to continue Jesus' mission of love on earth, we pray to have the courage to call out and condemn hypocrisy in ourselves and in others.

Personal Reflections and Ideas ... \_\_\_\_\_

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**Mon, Sep 15:** *"I ask that supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be offered for everyone, for kings and for all in authority"* (1 Tm 2:1-8). **Provision: Pray for "everyone," but in a special way for our world leaders.** I admit my prayers are sometimes through clenched teeth, but they are sincere, nonetheless. I can honestly say I wouldn't be like Jeremiah or Jonah, looking forward to God's vengeance. Instead, I would be joyful if God would change the hearts of those who use their power to hurt and to kill. Here's a suggestion: Each day this week, pick one world leader and pray for them. And not just the ones we call "bad guys." Pray too for the courage and strength of those in leadership roles who work for peace and justice.

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**Tue, Sep 16:** *As he drew near the city's gate, look: A man who had died was being carried out, the only-begotten son of his mother...Seeing her, the Lord was **moved inwardly** with compassion ...He said, "Young man, arise." The dead man sat up and he gave him to his mother* (Lk 7:11-17, literal transl.). The word in Greek is *splagchnizomai*: literally, to be moved in one's innards, in the deepest part of one's being. In other words, a gut punch. This is not feeling sorry for someone or passing by with a word of sympathy. Jesus **feels** the widow's pain deeply. We hear Jesus "gave" the young man to his mother. This is a lovely image. I can see Jesus looking into the eyes of the mother, not for praise and thanks, but with joy that he is able to heal her pain. **Provision: Don't grow immune to gut punches.** Jesus saw great poverty and sorrow in his lifetime. After a while, I imagine he grew tired. (That is why he always sought out time alone with God.) We get tired too and can grow immune to the sorrow we see. Pray God will keep your eyes, ears—and yes, your gut—open to the suffering around you.

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**Wed, Sep 17:** *"But Wisdom is vindicated by all her children"* (Lk 7:31-35). What does it mean to be a child of Wisdom? According to James, *"Wisdom from above is pure, peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds, shows no favoritism and is always sincere"* (3:17). Throw in patience—it usually takes time for Wisdom to be vindicated—and you have a difficult task indeed. **Provision: How can you be a child of Lady Wisdom?** Have you ever chosen to keep quiet, bite your tongue, and allow the other—your own child, perhaps—to experience life for themselves? Or conversely, have you spoken up for justice when others will not? Have you shown mercy, letting go of anger and debt? Pray today to Wisdom that she will guide you to be sincere and to do what is wise and gentle and just.

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**Thu, Sep 18:** *"Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and all that act accordingly have a good understanding"* (Ps 111, LXX transl.). As we strive to be children of Wisdom, we start with the humble acknowledgment of God's primacy. Not afraid of God but in awe of God's infinite power. For us to act accordingly, we accept we cannot discern God's ways. This is what it means to "have a good understanding." **Provision: Pray for acceptance.** Remember: "Resignation is giving up; acceptance is opening up." We accept in faith that "God's got this" even though we don't understand and may be suffering. And this, my friends, is not easy. We show our wisdom by praying for the grace of acceptance (or "holy indifference") every day.

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**Fri, Sep 19:** *"For the love of money is the root of all evils"* (1 Tm 6:2-12). I was watching a news show the other night and was struck by the frequency with which money was mentioned. Every story on this broadcast came back in some way to money. Of course, we could have a field day discussing those whose love of money dominates our culture, but perhaps we need to think how our *focus* on money can also blind us to what's important. **Provision: What role does money play in your life?** Money is a given. There's no getting away from it. We hear of budgets and programs being cut, billionaires and trillionaires, how much this celebrity or sports star makes, what is a "living wage" ... the list goes on forever. Numbers in general discount our humanity, whether they be the "collateral damage" of civilian casualties of war or the count of people who have died due to preventable illnesses. In *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl says, in essence, the more we are our numbers, the less we are human. Spend time in prayer reflecting on the role money plays in your life. Be aware when situations arise that distract you from what is meaningful and real.

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**Sat, Sep 20:** *"A Sower went out to sow his seed"* (Lk 8:4-15). The Sower knows no season. The Sower sows the seeds of goodness and truth always. **Provision: How's your soil these days?** Trampled by busyness? Rocky with doubt or temptations? Thorny with anxiety or "too much?" Remember, we bear fruit from soil made rich by integrating the difficulties we experience into our lives. Pray for the Sower to help you do just that.