Wisdom
Job 23:1-9, 10-14, ***16-17***

Then Job answered:
2 'Today also my complaint is bitter;
his hand is heavy despite my groaning.
3 O that I knew where I might find him,
that I might come even to his dwelling!
4 I would lay my case before him,
and fill my mouth with arguments.
5 I would learn what he would answer me,
and understand what he would say to me.
6 Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power?
No; but he would give heed to me.
7 There an upright person could reason with him,
and I should be acquitted for ever by my judge.

8 'If I go forward, he is not there;
or backward, I cannot perceive him;
9 on the left he hides, and I cannot behold him;
I turn to the right, but I cannot see him.
10 But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tested me, I shall come out like gold.
11 My foot has held fast to his steps;
I have kept his way and have not turned aside.
12 I have not departed from the commandment of his lips;
I have treasured in my bosom the words of his mouth.
13 But he stands alone and who can dissuade him?
What he desires, that he does.
14 For he will complete what he appoints for me;
and many such things are in his mind.
15 Therefore I am terrified at his presence;
when I consider, I am in dread of him.
16 God has made my heart faint;
the Almighty has terrified me;
17 If only I could vanish in darkness,
and thick darkness would cover my face!

Epistle
Hebrews 4:12-16

12 Indeed,
the word of God
is living and active,
sharper than any two-edged sword,
piercing until it divides
soul from spirit,
joints from marrow;
it is able to judge
the thoughts and intentions
of the heart.

13And before him
no creature is hidden,
but all are naked and laid bare
to the eyes of the one
to whom we must render an account.

14 Since, then,
we have a great high priest
who has passed through the heavens,
Jesus, the Son of God,
let us hold fast to our confession.

15For we do not have a high priest
who is unable to sympathize
with our weaknesses,
but we have one
who in every respect
has been tested as we are,
yet without sin.

16Let us therefore
approach the throne of grace with boldness,
so that we may receive mercy and find grace
to help in time of need.

Gospel
Mark 10:17-31

17 As he was setting out on a journey,
a man ran up and knelt before him,
and asked him,

'Good Teacher,
what must I do
to inherit eternal life?'

18 Jesus said to him,

'Why do you call me good?
No one is good but God alone.

19 You know the commandments:

"You shall not murder;
You shall not commit adultery;
You shall not steal;
You shall not bear false witness;
You shall not defraud;
Honour your father and mother." '

20 He said to him,
'Teacher,
I have kept all these
since my youth.'

21 Jesus, looking at him, loved him
and said,

'You lack one thing;
go, sell what you own,
and give the money to the poor,
and you will have treasure in heaven;
then come, follow me.'

22 When he heard this,
he was shocked
and went away grieving,
for he had many possessions.

23 Then Jesus looked around
and said to his disciples,

'How hard it will be
for those who have wealth
to enter the kingdom of God!'

24 And the disciples were perplexed
at these words.

But Jesus said to them again,

'Children, how hard it is
to enter the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel
to go through the eye of a needle
than for someone who is rich
to enter the kingdom of God.'

26 They were greatly astounded
and said to one another,

'Then who can be saved?'

27 Jesus looked at them and said,

'For mortals it is impossible,
but not for God;
for God all things are possible.'

28 Peter began to say to him,

'Look,
we have left everything
and followed you.'

29 Jesus said,

'Truly I tell you,
there is no one
who has left house
or brothers or sisters
or mother or father
or children
or fields,
for my sake
and for the sake
of the good news,
30 who will not receive
a hundredfold

now in this age
—houses,
brothers and sisters,
mothers and children,
and fields,
with persecutions—

and in the age to come
eternal life.

31 But many
who are first
will be last,
and the last
will be first.'

Reading Wisdom this Week

The RCL provides for Canadian Thanksgiving,
But the wider church continues with Job, 2nd of 4 weeks
For audio of the whole book, Robert Alter's 2019 translation:
http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2024/10/reading-job-in-robert-alter-translation.html

I don't think c23 offer Job's best lines
In 3 rounds of argument with 3 friends
Here, Job's response to round 3 Eliphaz

Scripture is not simply God talking to us,
but echoes of a chorus of human voices
expressing and informing millennia of reflection
on human experience of the mundane and divine

Does this riff by Job give voice to your experience,
or offer a more articulate expression of others'?
Does that model of reading Job work for you this time,
rather than your college syllabus, or Sunday School lesson?

In our geriatric ministry, we owe more than a nod to the fable,
or than a 'right answer' put in the voice of God next week
like platitudes offered at the bedsides and gravesides
epidemiological correlations confused with 'my fault'

2006, 'Rich Christians':
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2006/10/rich-christians-job23-mark10.html

2021 'Reframing in the Dark':
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2021/10/reframing-in-dark.html

Reading the Epistle this Week

The RCL gives Canadian Thanksgiving 1 Timothy
But the wider church continues with Hebrews 4, 2nd of 4 weeks
Audio of the whole book: David Bentley Hart's 2017 translation
http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2024/10/reposting-reading-of-hebrews-1-6.html
http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2024/10/reposting-reading-of-hebrews-7-13.html

The UCC has always denied verbal inspiration,
'the bible is the word of God' fundamentalism
In favour of 'the word is in the bible'
Plenary inspiration with Holy Spirit at each step

How does the image of a sharp two-edged sword,
Living and active, piercing, dividing,
Resonate with your experience of scripture?

Developing Jesus as high priest,
(written when 1000 years of temple priesthood was lost)
Is this a figure you can pray to or through,
A 'relatable' or 'empathetic' divine?

Can you adopt the diction,
'approaching the throne of grace',
Or do you resist the submissive shamed piety?

2019 Epiphany reading:
http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2019/02/thursday-wk-5-hebrews-4.html

What do you make of this one?

Reading the Gospel this Week

The RCL gives Canadian Thanksgiving Matthew
Sermon on the Mount 'consider the lilies' –
I find this 'rich young man', 'eye of the needle', fun stuff

Where's Mark's Jesus heading – not progress
and why does he rebuff being called 'Good Teacher'?

Which of the Ten Words are missing in the summary?
What are the limits of moral rules for behaviour?
How is wealth different?

I'm sure we've got 'camels and eye of needle' stuff
What do you make of 'impossible for mortals'?
Can you be good without God?
Is it enough to be good?

2021 'Reframing in the Dark':
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2021/10/reframing-in-dark.html

2015 Foothills Calgary 'Rich Christians'
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2015/10/rich-christians.html

2006 Beach Toronto 'Rich Christians':
http://www.billbrucewords.com/2006/10/rich-christians-job23-mark10.html

From last year Advent, starting this 'Year of Mark, here c.10:
http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2023/12/mark-10.html?q=%22Mark+10%22

What would you proclaim out of this on Thanksgiving?