

**BIBLE STUDY**  
**February 25, 2019**

**THE EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**Sirach 27: 4-7**

**Luke 6: 39-45**

**1 Corinthians 15: 54-58**

**1. Sirach 27: 4-7**

- Also called Ecclesiasticus (not to be confused with Ecclesiastes) or The Wisdom of Ben Sira or Sirach, the Greek form of his name.
- A deuterocanonical or apocryphal book, meaning that some Christians do not consider it part of the canon (approved list of divinely inspired books suitable for public reading) of the Bible. Catholics and Orthodox do consider it canonical. The deuterocanonical books are categorized in this way mainly because the majority were written in Greek or had much Greek influence of thought. They were rejected by Martin Luther during the Reformation as being inspired books because they were not in agreement with Reformation theology.
- However, Sirach was written in Hebrew in Jerusalem, but its Hebrew version was lost and was primarily known by its Greek version until the XIX century. It was written by Ben Sira, a native of Jerusalem, who devoted himself to the study of the Law and the teaching of it to others. His purpose was to demonstrate that the Hebrew way of life was superior to the Greek way of life.
- Sirach is similar in style to Proverbs, making use of short sayings, proverbs, aphorisms, maxims, and sayings to inspire persons to seek wisdom. It offers much advice about how to conduct one's daily affairs.
- The theme of these verses is that a person's speech is the principal way of evaluating their character.
- The husk is the refuse of the grain. When a person speaks, their faults become visible.
- The fire and heat of the oven tests the strength of the clay the potter has fashioned. Trials reveal the weaknesses of a person.
- The fruit of a tree reveals the nurturing the tree has received. A person's speech shows what is in their mind—how they have been raised.
- Conclusion: wait until someone speaks before you judge them.

**2. Luke 6: 39-45**

- Continuation of the Sermon on the Plain
- Jesus' admonition to refrain from judging and condemning another is followed by two parables or images about how difficult it is to see what is really going on inside a person in order to make an accurate judgment.
- It is like the blind leading the blind.

- It is like trying to take a splinter out of your brother or sister's eye when you have a wooden beam in your own.
- Hypocrite= actor. In ancient theatre actors wore masks. They hid their real selves. A hypocrite hides real character.
- If God is the only one who can see into the heart and know the real motives and intentions of a person, and he treats all with compassion and mercy, should that not be the model for our human interactions?
- The mention of hypocrites leads to a consideration of a tree and its fruit. There should be continuity between our hearts and our actions just as there is between a good tree and good fruit.
- Our deeds reveal what is in our heart. A good person has good in his/her heart. An evil person has evil.
- From the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.

### **3. 1 Corinthians 15: 54-58**

- Paul continues to reflect on the mystery of the Resurrection and our participation in it.
- vv 50-53: I tell you a mystery—that which is beyond us
- His premise: flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. The corruptible does not inherit the incorruption. "We shall be changed."
- Paul is speaking to a situation in which he believes that some to whom he is speaking will be alive when the Lord returns. "We shall not all fall asleep"
- All will be changed and will be clothed with immortality.
- Hosea 13:14 "Shall I deliver them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death? Where are your plagues, O Death! Where is your sting, Sheol"
- Paul borrows Hosea to create a victory shout for all those who are redeemed by Christ. Death has no power. Christ defeated death by his death and resurrection. His is the victory, not death's. Like a scorpion whose sting injects poison into its victim, death no longer has a sting. The sting of death was sin—Christ overcame death. The power of sin is the law—now we have grace and mercy instead of the law. So, sin has no power.
- God has given us victory over sin and death through Jesus Christ.
- Therefore, hang in there, don't give up. Trust God. Your perseverance will not be in vain.