Trinity 17 – October 12, 2025
Text: Proverbs 25:6-14
Theme: Humility is the Way

I don't know if any of you ever had the pleasure of watching a baseball game at the Kingdome in Seattle. It was demolished in 2000 but I watched quite a few games in the Kingdome in the 90's. Sadly, I did not work for Microsoft or Boing so, rather than the cool boxes that were right behind Homeplate, I enjoyed the 300 level at those games. The Kingdome gave new meaning to the term "nosebleed seats." The 300 level seats went straight up, and at the very top, your head was nearly touching the roof of the dome. Now I had a friend who would always buy the cheapest seats in the house and then, at the start of the second inning, she and her family would mosey on down to the 100 level and find empty seats right behind home plate in the midst of the season ticket holders. These were folks who had chosen not to use their $200 tickets that day. She wanted me to join them but I just could not. First it seemed like stealing to me. I had not paid for those seats. Second, and probably more importantly, I could not bear the walk of shame back to the 300 level if an usher decided to check my ticket.

On the other hand, once another friend invited me to a Seahawk game in their new stadium which is now called Lumen Field. I assumed they would be nosebleed seats but I forgot that he

worked for a bank, and I was invited into a luxury skybox. I'm here to tell you right now, sitting in cushioned leather seats and eating prime rib and shrimp cocktail while sipping Balvenie Scotch is the way to watch a football game. That was an amazing experience. But I realized that part of the enjoyment was knowing that I belonged there. There was no concern that an usher was going to come along to escort me out of the skybox, snatching my scotch from my hand and pointing me to the Olympia beer line.

King Solomon, the author of most of the proverbs in the book of Proverbs, gives us some instruction today about humility. Do not put yourself forward in the King's court, seems to be a common-sense kind of idea. In other words, know your place in this world and do not stray from it. This will bring you comfort and joy. If you paid for the 300 level seats, then sit in the three hundred level seats. Also, don't bring charges against your neighbor in court before you have spoken of it with your neighbor. Common-sense again. Blind-siding people with sneak attacks, even if it is your right to do so, does not make for good and loving relationships and the relationship is usually far more valuable than whatever material thing or ideal we are defending.

The Old Testament is the text for all of Jesus' teaching and preaching. That's why it is so important. Jesus takes these words

from Solomon and elevates them in the Gospel. He is using a wedding banquet as the object of His teaching but He is talking about the Christian life. Don't walk into the banquet and take the highest seat. Sit in the 300 level where you know you deserve to sit, and if you are invited down to the best seats in the house, praise God. Do not imagine that you have done enough to earn the best seat. Do not think that because you go to Church and Bible Class, you deserve to sit beside Jesus. Do not imagine that because you give a great deal of money to charities of all sorts, you deserve to sit with Jesus. No matter what good you have done, you have done far more evil than you have good when you tally up all your sins of thought, word, and deed.

We prayed today in the prayer of the day,

"…grant Your people grace to withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds to follow You, the only God…" Among the greatest of all those temptations that we're praying that God would help us withstand, is ungodly pride. Ungodly pride is something that undoes faith. When we begin to take pride in our words and our deeds, we begin to forget that it is not we who do any of it, but the Holy Spirit working through us. It is by the grace of God that we withstand the prideful temptations of the devil and that our

hearts remain pure so that we can follow Jesus. In our hymn of the day, we sing,

"As You, Lord, have lived for others, So may we for others live.

Freely have Your gifts been granted; Freely may Your servants give.

Yours the gold and Yours the silver, Yours the wealth of land and sea; We but stewards of Your bounty Held in solemn trust will be."

When we remember that everything good we have is only that which is entrusted to us by our Lord for our use to His glory, it is easier to refrain from taking credit for His work, ungodly pride. He has given to us freely and bountifully. Now it is our privilege and joy to be His stewards of His bounty. When we do that, it will "quench our fevered thirst of pleasure," and "stem our selfish greed of gain." This is something we do well to be on guard against every day of our lives because it is so easy to begin to believe that the things we accomplish are our own doing. It is so easy to begin to believe that the things that we think must be right, without even consulting God's Holy Word. It is so easy to find ourselves listening to the restless, Godless crowds, thinking that if so many believe this to be true, how can it be false just because God's Word says so?

Humility. Always remember your place, and life is easier. We are only stewards of the treasures, and we serve the King. It is our privilege to give all that we have been given to give. It is never our responsibility to determine the seating chart. It is not our responsibility to determine who deserves what. We live for others. We are able to live for others because our King died for us.

If you are ever tempted to believe that any idea, thing, or power is yours because you worked for it and earned it, think about the body and blood of Jesus. What did you do to earn the Son of God entering into your bodies with all His power and might at Holy Communion? Think about the waters of holy Baptism that continue to wash away all your sin. What did you do to earn being made clean like that? You did nothing. Nor did I. We were sitting at the top of the nosebleed seats with our heads crammed against the roof and Jesus walked up to us and said, "Follow me." He took us to the skybox in which we now live where we are fed and nourished every day until He returns for us and takes us to paradise. We did nothing. He did it all and gives it all to us freely to us.