

**A Sermon for the 22nd Sunday after Pentecost  
November 9, 2025**



*Come to New Life!*



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**New Life Episcopal Church, Uniontown, OH**

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[Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost – The Episcopal Church](#)

**Preamble:** I pray the Holy Spirit will guide me into truth, so that I do not speak on my own authority, as I attempt to understand God's holy word for the honor and glory of Jesus Christ. Amen,

In a couple of days, on the 11<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate Veteran's Day. This is one of the few non-religious days recognized as significant by a variety of countries. That's because the tradition traces its origin to the Armistice of WW I in 1918. In fact, the holiday was known as Armistice Day in the US until 1954, when President Eisenhower renamed it to include all veterans that served in subsequent conflicts as well as in peacetime. In honor of all veterans, past and present, today like most churches, we recognize our members that served in uniform. How is it that this secular holiday gets such widespread recognition in houses of worship across all worldwide denominations? There is a traditional connection between the Church and the Military. Throughout time, armies around the globe traveled with embedded chaplains or clerics or shaman. Soldiers and military leaders often seek moral authority and spiritual guidance to do the right thing when under stress. The Old Testament contains multiple stories where prayer and divine intervention changed the course of a military action. Gideon's force of 300 defeated an army of 135,000 (Judges 6:8). Jehoshaphat set an example of how God's people faced a trial against the armies of Moab, Ammon and Mount Ser. (2 Chronicles 20), Elisha prayed for God to intervene and strike the attacking Syrian army blind. Thus, he was able to direct them away from battle and into captivity in Samaria (2 Kings 6:18). Perhaps there is some truth to the adage "There are no atheists in foxholes". Literature and film often refer to how faith plays a role when facing adversity or belief in the side of righteousness. Psalm 91 is known as the Soldier's Psalm and sections of Psalm 23, "...Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death..." are often recited by some character faced with the likelihood of ultimate sacrifice. Observance of faith-based traditions provides a sense of security and comfort and remembrance of home.

Reliance on faith and tradition in times of insecurity or uncertainty is not unique to the military though. Look at our readings from today and this becomes evident. In Haggai, the prophet is addressing the remnant of the Jewish people, first displaced to Babylonia and put into slavery then released back to Judah. These people became complacent, falling away from their traditions and neglecting their temple in favor of self-service. This was because of a fear that peace was fleeting, and all could be taken away at the whim of a Persian King. They misplaced their faith in God, substituting it with faith only in themselves and immediate gratification. Haggai reminds them that the Lord is with them, as he had promised, and that although there are still many trials ahead, they should not fear as the spirit abides among them.

Paul's second letter to Thessalonians addresses a somewhat similar but more immediate problem. False teaching was causing the new Christians to believe the day of reckoning was already at hand, in part because of the extensive persecution in these early years. This caused lethargy in some, and fear in others. Paul reaffirms his teaching that Lord's Day would not come until after the rebellion and the devil is revealed, and that would happen on God's schedule which is unknown to us. Paul encourages them to

hold fast to the traditions they were taught, then good hope and eternal comfort would come from Jesus Christ and God, our Father.

Tradition and faith are two cornerstones upon which we build our churches. For Christians, the fundamental third is belief in the resurrected Christ. Non-Christians struggle with accepting this idea, challenging both the physical and metaphysical components of resurrection. The Sadducees attempted to stymie Jesus's teaching of a future resurrection by presenting a riddle about a wife with multiple husbands. How could one reconcile events occurring over a lifetime of apparent tragedy and suffering. Jesus had to explain that there are two separate states. One, in this world, where we live our lives, are given to marriage, and suffer physical and emotional trials. But, for those that are worthy, there is another state where our physical bodies do not matter, time is irrelevant, and there is no further death. In this second state the laws of man do not apply. In this second realm, God is in active communication with all his children. Knowing that this second age that awaits us is both blissful and enduring provides the solace and peace necessary to pass through the temporary pain and suffering of our earthly life. I witnessed this yesterday at a funeral service for my 95-year-old aunt. Her entire family: children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews and many friends gathered not to weep but to rejoice in the role she played in our lives. We knew that she was reunited with her husband, her siblings, and all those that preceded her as baptized and practicing children of God.

Our obligation to ourselves is to live our lives in a manner that will be deemed worthy. If we keep the faith, maintain the traditions, to wit God's law, and most importantly believe in the resurrected Christ, and what that means for us, then entrance to this second state is assured regardless of the timetable, which is under God's control.

Amen