

September 1st
(Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost)

“Produce God’s Righteousness”

Text: James 1:17-27
(Deuteronomy 4:1-2,6-9; Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23)

We have been speaking of body building in terms of strength training. It is important, however, to remember that strength is defined different as the body of Christ as opposed to physical strength. The strength that we seek to increase in the body of Christ reflects the values we seek to exercise. Strength in the world is based on competition where one person wins, and another loses. Strength in the Kingdom of God is about cooperation and inclusion where everyone wins. We said last week that we have a choice to make. Will we seek to build our strength in the world or build up the body of Christ. Deuteronomy is encouraging the people of God to exercise the statutes and ordinances God has given, which are very different than those practiced by the world. In exercising those statutes, they will become attractive to the world. In the Gospel reading, Jesus redefines our understanding of waste. Where we think that what comes out of a body is waste, Jesus claims it is what is most impactful. It is not what you hear, but what you say that matters. As we switch from Ephesians to a focus on the letter of James, we hear the importance of what comes out. We are to receive God’s Word with meekness, but it is not to produce waste but rather God’s righteousness. How are you receiving the Word and what is being produced through your life? Is it building up the body of Christ?