



Come and See!

January 28, 2018

The Word...

“Brothers and sisters: I should like you to be free of anxieties.
An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord,
how he may please the Lord.
But a married man is anxious about the things of the world,
how he may please his wife, and he is divided.
An unmarried woman or a virgin is anxious about the things of the Lord,
so that she may be holy in both body and spirit.
A married woman, on the other hand, is anxious about the things of the world,
how she may please her husband.
I am telling you this for your own benefit, not to impose a restraint upon you,
but for the sake of propriety and adherence to the Lord without distraction.
(from 1 Cor 7:32-35)

Pondering the Word ...

Obviously, St. Paul doesn't know how good we've gotten at multitasking!

The Greek word he uses in this passage is *merimna*, which clearly translates to “anxious,” but has an underlying nuance of something being divided, fractured into parts. And we all know what it feels like having our attention divided between work, home, ministry, spouse, children, church, volunteer efforts, etc. “Fractured” pretty much sums it up, unless...unless we keep our center whole and grounded in Christ.

Paul draws a distinction between a faith life and a secular life, and it is true: if our faith does not animate the other parts of our lives, we will indeed find ourselves divided. Or if we are too wrapped up in the “things of this world,” it is easy to get distracted from things that please the Lord. But by fulfilling our vocation, the call we have received from God, and doing so with love, we *are* pleasing God. We have no reason for anxiety.

I remember a story I heard about a family with nine kids. The mother was asked by an incredulous observer, “How do you divide your love between them all?” She smiled and answered, “Oh love is never about dividing. Love only multiplies.”

Living the Word...

I'm not saying St. Paul's point isn't valid. It's a good exercise every so often to really look at your life for things that might be distracting you from your call. One way to think about it is to ask: “What do I need to free myself from so that I can be free for--whatever God calls me to do. The other thing to consider is how much attention you are paying to your personal relationship with Jesus. I know that when I lose my center in Christ, all sorts of things start spinning out of control: I am less loving, less patient, less content. In order for me to love as God wants me to love, I have to allow time to rest in God's embrace and let God to love me.

Take a look at your life this week. See if you can free yourself from some anxiety by allowing God to multiply the love you have to give by spending some quality time with the Source of all love.

Personal Reflections and Ideas: _____

Jan 29: *The man who had been possessed pleaded to remain with him. But Jesus would not permit him but told him, "Go home to your family and announce to them all that the Lord in his pity has done for you."*(Mk 5:1-20)

How does Jesus call you to follow? In this story, the man who has been rid of "Legion" wants to remain with Jesus. Who wouldn't want to stay with the person who has healed you and given you back your life? We don't know how long the man had been suffering. Perhaps members of his family have died; or, more likely, they'd just as soon never see him again. The Gerasenes would probably rather this guy just disappear given that he is the reason they lost 2,000 head of swine. But Jesus has other plans for him. "No. Stay right here in your own town. Be a living witness to the blessings of the Lord. Share the Good News of what God has done for you. By your very life, evangelize." Most calls to follow Jesus don't require drastic life changes. God comes to us, heals us, and calls us right where we are, just as we are. How is Jesus calling you today to share the Good News?

Jan 30: *"Incline your ear, O LORD; answer me, for I am afflicted and poor."*(Ps 86)

Or, to use a trendier phrase, "Lean into me, Lord." We hear that expression as a way of describing how we should not run away from difficult or negative situations, that we should engage them, come closer, incline ourselves towards that which is difficult, and turn whatever is bad into good. "Lean into me, Lord for I am sinful, addicted, ailing, depressed, lonely. Lean into me and turn my affliction into blessing like you did for the Gerasene demonic and so many others. Use me and let my suffering be for your glory."

Jan 31: *"It is I, the shepherd, who have done wrong. But these are sheep; what have they done? Punish me and my kindred."* (2 Sm 24: 2, 9-17)

I can't say this with 100% certainty, but from the Old Testament stories I've read about Israel's kings, I can't name one other than David who wasn't completely obsessed with himself and his own survival. In yesterday's OT reading, we hear David's lament over his rebellious son Absalom's death, wishing it was he who had died instead. Today, David asks God why his people should suffer for his sin rather than him. When God chose David, God said, "I found a man after my own heart," a person willing to suffer for the sake of those entrusted to his care...just as God does for us. Let us pray today that God will send us leaders like David, not ones so concerned with their own political survival, but willing to do what is right for those they represent.

Feb 1: *"I am going the way of all flesh. Take courage."* (1 Kgs 2: 1-4, 10-12)

David is dying and admonishing Solomon to be strong and remain faithful to God. Despite his sins and mistakes, David is at peace, not fearing death but having faith. David has not been perfect. He has let his ego and lust get in the way numerous times. But he never allowed his sinfulness to loom larger than his confidence in God's mercy. We are all going the way of the flesh. Let us follow David's example finding comfort and peace in God's covenant.

Feb 2: *"Since the children share in blood and flesh, Jesus likewise shared in them, that through death he might...free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life....Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested." (Heb 2:14-18)*

Jesus suffered so we can turn to him in our suffering. Jesus died to show us that nothing we encounter in our earthly existence is death-dealing. Like Simeon, our eyes have seen God's salvation in Christ, so we can live and die in peace and without fear. *"When we face our fear of death and slow down our busy lives, we come to realize...death's true purpose is to teach us how to live."*(Molly Friedenfeld, *The Book of Simple Human Truths*)

Feb 3: *The Apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while."* (Mk 6:30-34)

You've been busy all day working in and for the Kingdom of God. Take a cue from the Apostles. Sit down with Jesus and review and report all you've seen, done, and heard. The good things and the not-so-good things, the times when you were God's messenger and the times you might have impeded God. It's called the Examen Prayer and it gives us the opportunity to offer our days, and, by extension, our lives, for God's glory. Each night, resolve to report in to Jesus, then listen for his invitation: "Come away and rest a while."