

THE WORD OF THE LORD

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (02.13.22)

Reading I: Jeremiah 17:5-8

Psalm: Psalm 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6

Reading II: 1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20

Gospel: Luke 6:17, 20-26

Overall Theme:

- ❖ Trust in God versus trust in man: these are the two ways which one's life can take. The first leads to blessing, life, and happiness; the latter leads to curse, death, and unfulfillment.

Historical Context:

- ❖ We possess a good amount of biographical information about the prophet Jeremiah, which helps us to piece together the story of his life and the way it fits with our different readings for today. Jeremiah was likely familiar with Psalm 1, and so he has it in mind when he offers the prophecies which we find in today's first reading. We also know that Jeremiah experienced a tremendous amount of suffering and persecution in his life, and in this sense, he stands out as an exemplary role model of exactly the kind of attitude that Jesus calls for in the Gospel.

Summary of the Readings:

- ❖ First reading: Jeremiah contrasts “the one who trusts in human beings” with “the one who trusts in the Lord.” The one is barren, bereft, boring. The other is fruitful, flourishing, fulfilled.
- ❖ Psalm: An incredible Psalm deliberately placed at the beginning of the Psalter in order to draw attention to what the whole thing is about: the two ways – good and evil – which lie before man, and the centrality of God's law in enabling man to choose life. Whereas the wicked man slides deeper and deeper into sin (“follows... walks in the way... sits...”), the just man delights in God's law and ponders it day and night.
- ❖ Second reading: Paul reminds us that ours is an eminently historical religion, and it is a real person, Jesus Christ, in whom we place our faith and trust. Unlike the pagan myths which only ever take place in an abstracted, timeless sense, Christianity boldly claims to be firmly situated within history; God entered time and space in order that time and

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space and everything within them might be sanctified and redeemed.

- ❖ **Gospel:** The beautiful ‘Sermon on the Plain,’ which is Luke’s version of Matthew’s more famous ‘Sermon on the Mount.’ Jesus would have given similar sermons dozens of times during His travels, so it’s not surprising to see Him repeating here much of the material already found in Matthew.
 - Jesus reminds His followers that if they take the Christian life seriously, their fate may well be like that of the prophets. We too have a prophetic mission to fulfill, proclaiming to a fallen world the reality that Christ has come, and He will come again.

Point of Connection:

- ❖ The image of the tree which both Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17 evoke is a deliberate harking back to the Tree of Life found in the opening chapters of Genesis. This Tree was situated among the four rivers of Eden, which gave water – that is, life – to the whole world. This same Tree will reappear in Revelation 22 in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem, where the Tree is depicted as bearing twelve kinds of fruit, symbolizing the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, the Tree of Life points us to Christ Himself, the source of all spiritual life who enveloped the world in a tidal wave of grace by virtue of His loving death on a tree.

Practical Application:

- ❖ We don’t like talking about hell today, but as Catholic Christians we must! Jesus is very clear about the ‘woes’ (also translated ‘curses’) which will come upon those who fail to live out the Gospel in this present life. This is a message not for other people out there, but for us personally! Given this, we all need to engage in a daily examination of conscience, earnestly beseeching the Lord for His healing mercy.

Memory Verse:

- ❖ “Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is the Lord.” - Jeremiah 17:7

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