

I am with you!

Jeremiah 1:4-9, 17-19

Psalm 71:1-6, 15+17

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Luke 4:21-30

In the first reading Jeremiah, dedicated from the womb by God to be a prophet, is given encouragement to stand fast, and to give a message of truth. Many will resist and fight but they shall not prevail because the prophet is fortified and delivered by God whose divine power strengthens him.

The psalmist acknowledges the Lord as his refuge, hope, trust, and stronghold. His praises of God's glory will continue unceasingly as he seeks to be rescued from the hand of the wicked. God's justice and saving power are everywhere and he realizes his dependence even from birth, through his youth, and into his maturity. The psalmist continues to proclaim God's wondrous deeds.

In the second reading Paul makes it clear that we are to set our hearts on the greater gifts. It is particularly emphasized that LOVE must accompany all our actions if they are to be effective. Love is patient, rejoices with the truth, never jealous or pompous, does not brood over injury, and never fails! Love bears all things, believes in all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Faith, hope, and love are great virtues but love is the greatest.

In the Gospel Jesus understands that he is not being accepted in his native place. He refuses to show miraculous signs of healing in their midst and tells them so by specific examples of the past. The listeners become indignant and wished to harm him but he walks away unharmed through their midst.

The Father's Love sent the Son,
The Son's Love shows us the Way,
The Holy Spirit's Love lights the path.

The Old and the New

Paul reminds us to set our hearts upon the greater gifts of the Holy Spirit and always cultivate love in all of our actions. Our neighbors, co-workers, others we know, can seek and receive great gifts of the Spirit but we cannot recognize such unless we are open and affirming. Jesus was rejected by his friends and relatives in his hometown and nothing can be more hurtful than rejection by those you believe are closest to you.

When Jesus returned to the village where he grew up the people already heard of his healings and when he spoke in the Temple they were amazed at his gracious words. Yet he sensed they were not open to him and in their eyes he was still the "son of a carpenter." Instead of giving them something new as they expected, he reminded them of old uncomfortable relationships: Elijah and the widow, Elisha and the Syrian, relationships that exemplified great faith coming from least expected places. Jesus once said: "*every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old.*"

His listeners were not yet ready for the new since they failed to comprehend the lessons of old that are still eye-opening experiences.

