

September 24, 2017

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Lord answers our prayers in unexpected ways!

Isaiah 55:6-9

Psalms 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18

Philippians 1:20c-24,27a

Matthew 20:1-16a

In the first reading Isaiah reminds everyone to call and seek the Lord while he may be found. Scoundrels must forsake their ways, their wicked thoughts, and turn to God for mercy before it is too late. The Lord is generous and forgiving and his ways and thoughts are high above ours.

The Psalmist describes the Lord as great, unsearchable, slow to anger, good to all, just in all his ways, compassionate, kind, holy in all his works, and always near to all who call upon him in truth. The Lord is to be continually praised.

In the second reading Paul notes that while he still lives it is Christ who will be magnified by his actions. He longs to depart this life but remains for the benefit of the community which is advised to conduct itself in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ.

In the Gospel Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven in terms of a story of people hired to work in a vineyard. At day's end the latecomers are given the same pay as those hired early in the morning, and there is a grumbling of why this should be. The landowner's response was direct: "Are you envious because I am generous?"

Our communion with the Father
Is revealed in the Son
With the life of the Holy Spirit.

The prophet Isaiah points to God's ways that are higher than anything we can even imagine, unsearchable things as the psalmist says. Jesus tells a story with a most unexpected ending that riles many hard working people. Why should more be given to those who did less? Perhaps we are asked to realize that oftentimes opportunities are not readily available to many people and those that start late can accomplish much and their contributions are necessary pieces to the puzzle of life. However, this is not a reason to let opportunities slide because there is always danger that we may let something precious slip our grasp, something that may never arise again.

In the parable there is no injustice by the landowner and the latecomers are not accused in any way of being lazy and these aspects avoid the intrusion of morality into the story. Imagine if you will a normal work situation where the normal expectation is completely turned topsy-turvy. The master is not extremely generous for he could have increased the pay of the early starters, but what he does is to simply violate expectations, and what the first workers "thought" would happen did not. One source of frustration we seldom recognize is expecting too much of others, or expecting specifically what they ought to do, say, be, and give.



If I expect a person to behave and react in a certain way in a given situation and my expectations are not met, have I the right to be upset and angry? It is wisdom to stop expecting and gently get into the mood of acceptance as it is expecting too much that brings frustrations and disappointments. Perhaps I too sometimes fail to live up to the expectations of others.

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