

March 3, 2019 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hold onto the word and shine like lights in the world!

Sirach 27:4-7

Psalm 92

1Corinthians 15:54-58

Luke 6:39-45

One's faults appear when speaking and one's speech discloses the bent of one's mind. No one is to be praised before he speaks for it is in our listening that they are tested. In tribulation the just are tested.



The psalmist indicates how good it is to give thanks to the Lord, and sing praises to the Most High. Those who are just shall flourish and bear fruit even in old age and remain sturdy and vigorous. The Lord, his rock, is the One in whom there is no wrong.

The sacred words of Scripture will be fulfilled when we, who are corruptible, become clothed with incorruptibility. The power of sin brings death but God brings us victory through Jesus Christ. We are to always be firm and steadfast, always devoted to the work of the Lord. Such labor is not in vain.

Jesus taught his disciples the importance of first understanding one's own faults before pointing to the faults of others. The blind, Jesus said, cannot lead the blind or both will end up falling into a pit. Just as a good tree produces good fruit, so does a good person bring good from the storehouse of his heart. It is from the fullness of the heart that the mouth speaks.

**The Father brings us victory  
Through the Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.  
The Holy Spirit reminds us to ever be thankful**

Why do we criticize the faults of others so readily? Hypocrisy is detested by our God and is readily recognized by observant people. Too often we are blind to our very own shortcomings and do not make an effort to become aware of them. Is it possible that in God's eyes our "small sins" may be much more serious than we realize? Before being critical of another, stop and think of how you can be affirming rather than sarcastic. Sarcasm has as its root meaning, "tearing of the flesh."

How many times have I realized that it would have been better to have remained silent, noticing my conscience has been disturbed by the worldly interaction. *A flood of words is never without fault; whoever controls the lips is wise.* (Proverbs 10:19)



### (3.2) Truth Speaks in Silence

Solomon, chosen by God *asks for a listening heart*<sup>1</sup>. He says, I am your servant; *give me discernment that I may know your testimonies*.<sup>2</sup> *Guide me with Your teaching by listening to your words*.<sup>3</sup> *May Your teaching soak in like the rain, and Your utterance drench like the dew, like a downpour upon the grass, like a shower upon the crops*.<sup>4</sup>

The Israelites said to Moses, “*You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we shall die.*”<sup>5</sup> Not that way for me, O Lord, not that way, do I pray, but rather with the Prophet Samuel I humbly and earnestly plead: “*Speak, for your servant is listening.*”<sup>6</sup>

Let not Moses, nor any of the Prophets speak to me, but You speak rather, O Lord God, the Inspirer and Enlightener of all the Prophets, for You alone, without them, can perfectly instruct me while they without You will avail me nothing. They may indeed speak words, but they give not the spirit. Beautifully do they speak, but if You be silent they move not my heart. They give the letter of the Law, but You disclose its Spirit. They announce mysteries, but You unlock their secret meaning. They declare the commandments, but You empower us to fulfill them. They point out the Way but You give inner strength to walk in it. They work outwardly only, but You instruct and enlighten our inmost selves. They water without but You *bring forth the flow of living water*.<sup>7</sup> We hear their words, but You impart understanding to the hearing.

So let not Moses speak to me, but do You speak, O Lord, my God, the eternal Truth, in case I die and be fruitless. If I am only reprov'd outwardly, and not enkindled within, I might be condemned at the Judgment because the word was heard and not lived up to, known and not loved, believed and not witnessed.

Speak then, Lord, for your servant understands *You have the words of eternal life*.<sup>8</sup> Speak to me, that it may bring comfort to my soul and improvement of my whole life, and be conducive to your praise and glory, and everlasting honor.



This article is based on Book 3, Chapter 2 of Thomas of Kempis' writing, "Imitation of Christ." It is not a translation, and there are many of those, but a personal reflection on his writing; if any of it helps give credit to Thomas of Kempis; if any of it fails the responsibility is mine. ( rfm)

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<sup>1</sup> 1Kings 3:9-10

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 119:125

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 78:1

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 32:2

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 20:19

<sup>6</sup> 1Samuel 3:10

<sup>7</sup> John 7:38

<sup>8</sup> John 6:68