

Commentary on the Readings March 8, 2020

The Second Sunday in Lent

The readings for today have many themes and suggestions, all of which are appropriate for Lent. They range all the way from **obedience** in the first reading to **glory** in the Gospel, but how do we pull them together? Let me answer that question this way: Have you ever asked yourself, or thought, "*What do I get for being obedient and faithful or even holy? What's in it for me?*" Let us see what the readings have to say about this.

In the **First Reading**, from the *Book of Genesis (12:1- 4)*, we hear or read how God called Abram (Abraham) to pick up all of his belongings and family and move to a land he didn't know. Abraham didn't say, "*OK God, but what's in it for me?*" He was obedient and God gave him not only a child late in life, but Abraham became the father of many nations and the Father of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths. He is remembered every day in the prayers of millions of people all over the world.

In the **Responsorial Psalm**, (*33:4- 22*), the psalmist lays out his life before God in complete trust knowing that whatever God does with him, it will be for the best. Trusting in God is a virtue to which most of us give little thought. The need to be in control is so strong in western culture that we are often blind to our own weaknesses. Lent is a good time to turn that around.

The **Second Reading** is from *St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy (1:8- 10)*. There we hear Paul encouraging Timothy to be strong in the face of hardship. We don't hear what that hardship is, but we know from other writings that Paul is in prison and Timothy is facing difficulties in carrying on with Paul's mission. Never do we hear either of these men complaining of their hardships; rather, they trust in the Lord Jesus who holds out to them "immortality through the gospel."

The **Gospel Reading** is from the *Gospel of Matthew (17:1-9)*. In this passage, we hear the familiar story that we call the *Transfiguration*. Here Jesus appears with Moses and Elijah in a glorified state. The message here is to all of us: "*This is what's in it for you.*" In other words, if you are faithful and obedient like Moses and Elijah, like Peter and Paul and many others, you will be glorified when you reach heaven. Moses and Elijah were given very tough jobs in God's Plan of Salvation and they fulfilled them well. We are given small and sometimes insignificant jobs and often disregard them; but God holds each of us responsible for fulfilling his or her role in His Plan, and our reward will be beyond description.

To follow the Lenten regulations faithfully is not easy; but then, nothing that is worthwhile is ever easy. We should have a goal, a purpose or an objective to help us in our observance of Lent. All we have to do is look to the Gospel to see the ultimate goal which is for each of us to be with Jesus and His disciples on that mountain top and be in the glory of the resurrection. That is what heaven is all about and that is *what's in it for us when we succeed*. Something to think about in our prayer time this week!

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