

As we close out this season of Ordinary Time

We receive another lesson on discipleship

What it is

Some of the qualities of a disciple

How do we live it out?

Our first reading was only 2 verses

It began with a cry from Zion or Israel to their God

Why have you forsaken us?

Why have you forgotten?

And it closes with words of comfort from God

Even if a mother should forget the child of her womb

I will never forget you

God is present in the world

He is present in our lives

Although it may seem as if he is absent at times

In the Letter to the Hebrews, St Paul reflects on this

All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful,

But sorrowful;

Yet to those who have been trained by it,

Afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

**This reading from Isaiah is from a time when the Israelite nation
has turned from God**

Not all of them

God always preserved at least a remnant, a few faithful people

It is the remnant that calls out today

But as we read last week

The sun rises on the good and the bad

Likewise, when His people turned from Him

All feel the punishment

Job knew what this was like

In the midst of his suffering he said:

Shall we indeed accept good from God

And not accept adversity?

But even in this, God will not forget His children

This turning from God is what Christ speaks of today

Whom will you serve?

God or mammon?

No one can have 2 masters

You will either love one or hate the other

Be devoted to one and despise the other

In this reading, Jesus offers us examples of the extreme

Either one or the other

There is one central question

How this is lived in the less important matters is both / and

But the foundation is built on a choice

Whom or what will we serve?

In a certain respect, we all are slaves of something

We all have our master

There is one thing that ultimately sways our choices

Seek first the Kingdom of God

Look around

Look at the lilies in the summertime

How beautiful they were

But where are they today?

Look at the birds

How they are taken care of

Even in the midst of a long cold winter

So is Jesus telling us to just forget striving to provide for ourselves?

For our loved ones?

Is it that easy?

Just trust

And if things go bad, it is proof you don't trust enough

It is not quite that simple

He is not calling us to forget these things

He is using the extreme to make his point

He is calling us to make that one foundational choice

God or mammon

What has our ultimate devotion?

What is at the very center of my life?

Make that call

Seek first the Kingdom of God

Then get to work

Very few of us are called to go off to a monastery or convent

Even then, the leadership has to be concerned for the needs and well-being of others

Jesus invites us to look at our lives

This is perfect timing as we begin Lent on Wednesday

To take a look and see what is at the center

What is the model of our life?

Discipleship or the world?

We can see this in many of the cities in the world today

When St Patrick's in NYC was built

It dominated the surroundings

The same can be said for Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago

For almost any city, especially in the US

But go there today, and what do you find?

They are not easy to find

Even with today's GPS

What is easy to find is the skyline

The towers

The financial centers of the city

When we look into our hearts, what do we find?

Worry and anxiety?

Or trust and love?

Jesus tells us not to let worries and anxiety be our focus

He knows we need food and clothing

We need shelter

But life is more than food

The body is more than the clothes we wear

Life itself, our very existence is a gift from God

We exist because of His providence and love

Shelter and food are important

But what is our highest concern?

Is it our bank statement?

Our education?

Our retirement portfolios?

When these are the center, our lives are turned upside down

God is something we fit into these things

But when God is our center

These things fall into proper perspective

Could you imagine a mother forgetting her child?

Even if that happened, God will never forget

Not a sparrow, not a flower

Certainly not a son or daughter

This gives us confidence

Seek first the Kingdom of God

He doesn't call us to seek only His kingdom

But to seek it first

And let everything else fall into place

This way our focus is sharp, and on the right thing

We will know what to do with our money

Our health

Our time and our leisure

Then they will be used to serve God and His kingdom

When we seek first the Kingdom of God

God will provide

He will provide manna at times

He will provide work at times

He will provide life

Our worries and anxiety cannot provide any of this

We are most precious in His eyes

We accept whatever he offers

And we work hard to bring it to fruition

Not in anxiety and worry

But in confidence and love

For His glory

For His kingdom