

The Baptism of the Lord
January 10, 2021
“The Right Attitude”

Is 55:1-11
1 Jn 5:1-9
Mk 1:7-11

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Probably the most important factor that we can bring to anything we do – and even the way we live our life – is to have the right attitude. Our work depends upon it – So do our interpersonal relationships. And, even more importantly, the success of our vocation – be it marriage, the single life, or religious life – absolutely depend upon it.

The right attitude is characterized by many different things – including a positive outlook, openness to new possibilities, and openness to change – It also includes not being deterred by negative opinions, setbacks, or the bad attitude of others.

Having the right attitude includes a certain humility that understands and accepts the shortcomings of others with whom we live and work. Above all, the right attitude is characterized by our openness to God – and our willingness to do and to become all that God wills for ourselves, for others, and for the world around us – and doing so in a cheerful manner!

The Chosen People had lost their homeland, their kingdom, and were exiled in Babylon. They had disobeyed God – they had become arrogant, self-serving, and corrupt. Even in Babylon, most of them did not change – but gave themselves over to the culture and society of the pagan Chaldeans.

However, the faithful few – the remnant – were getting discouraged. So, in the scripture for today, Isaiah holds out hope for them. They were hungry and thirsty for much more than food or drink. Consequently, God would bring them a food and drink that would fill their hearts and spirits – something far more than any material desire that they could have. Moreover, God would forgive their sins and transgressions. God would even renew the Covenant. But they must repent, stay focused upon God, and bring an attitude of surrender and reliance upon God’s thoughts and God’s ways. Above all, they must receive God’s word in their hearts and bring the sense of His presence into everything they said and did throughout each day of their lives.

The Gospel selection tells us that Jesus, himself, brought this attitude of surrender to God into every aspect of his life. The Son of the Father – the Co-eternal Word of God – set aside his divinity to become one of us! Yet, in doing so, Jesus revealed himself as the most completely human of us all. Jesus did and became all that the Father asked of him as a human person – an example for all of us!

In St. Mark's Gospel, Jesus went to the Jordan River as an example that we should follow. He showed his willingness to do all that the Father asked. And when he emerged from the water, the Holy Spirit anointed him. The Father spoke and said that He was well-pleased in all that Jesus was and was doing.

In his humanity, Jesus was like us in every way except in our sinfulness. He always had the right attitude. He showed us how to become more like himself. Moreover, it's important to remember that we receive the Holy Spirit at our own Baptism. Nevertheless, is the Father pleased with us as we grow and mature over the years? Do we have the right attitude? Are we open to all that the Father asks of us? Do we make quiet time and have space each day to be able to hear the Spirit of God in our hearts?

Finally, in the second reading, St. John has hopeful words for those who doubt Jesus himself as God's Son and the salvation he brought for the world. The authenticity of Jesus and the validity of his mission are proved: by the Spirit who came upon Jesus – by the water from which he emerged – and by the blood he shed at his death which resulted in his Resurrection!

Brothers and Sisters, the same resurrection awaits us if we live and die in however the manner that God allows life to unfold for us. What we must do is to keep all of God's Commandments – and especially the Great Commandment of Jesus which is to love all others just as he has loved us!

St. John also tells us that the Commandments are not burdensome. They reinforce the most human way to become a person. They seem burdensome only when we let our desire and quest for wealth, pleasure, and power to overshadow how the right use of these things contribute to the glory we give to God. Thus, if we have the right attitude – which is the right spirit – we will use wealth, pleasure, and power according to God's plan and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If we do so, we will always be serving God and others – and not ourselves in any selfish way.

So, let us pray, today, that we always have the right attitude and that we remain steadfast in this most noble way of life!

Amen.

January 10, 2021

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