

7th Ordinary Sunday
February 24, 2019
“Radical Discipleship”

1 Sam 26:2...23

1 Cor 15:45-49

Lk 6: 27-38

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

It goes without saying that we expect good behavior from upright people – and that we are not surprised when criminals do bad things. People are simply acting as they are accustomed to behaving. However, we are surprised when someone whom we considered upright commits a crime – or when someone, whom we considered “bad”, does something truly wonderful!

Furthermore, the savvy wisdom of our modern culture and society are such that we don't do harm to our friends – nor do we go out of our way and favor our enemies. Certainly, we don't give our enemies any advantage over ourselves – nor do we give them any opportunity to do us harm! However, taken seriously, today's scriptures cast all this wisdom and reasonableness aside!

In the first reading, David spares the life of King Saul who was his mortal enemy. Saul had lost favor with God – He discovered that David would succeed him. So he hunted David as he would hunt a dangerous wild animal!

For his part, David was mostly on the run for his life. He assumed a defensive posture. And when David finally had the chance to kill Saul, he refused. Saul was God's choice for king – And David believed that only God could bring an end to his reign! So David merely took the king's spear and water jug – and, subsequently, from a distance, negotiated a kind of truce. David would, shortly after, leave the country for awhile – and Saul would, eventually, be killed by the Philistines.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus radicalizes the behavior that a true disciple must embrace and exhibit. It goes far beyond what any society or culture would expect or espouse. We are to love our enemies; do good to those who hate us; pray for those who mistreat us! We are to give and not count the cost – We are to give more than what is asked – And not try to recover what someone has taken from us!

All this is radical discipleship! It presumes that we live on a different level than the surrounding culture. It expects us to be even more than what ordinary folks expect us or themselves to be.

Yet, when we think about it, it is an attempt to behave toward all others in the same way that God actually behaves toward us. For we are all sinners. We do harm. We fail in every way imaginable. Moreover, we fail again and again – even when we apologized and promised to do better. But God still loves us. God still forgives us. God still blesses us with His life – as well as with material and spiritual gifts. Moreover, there is no real way that we can ever pay God back!

St. Paul describes this in his First Letter to the Corinthians. He contrasts the two Adams – The first Adam whom God created – and the second Adam who is Jesus Christ. The first Adam brought us our human, material life on this earth – While Jesus brought us the spiritual life of another dimension – that of the Kingdom of Heaven!

Adam came from the earth, while Jesus came from heaven. From the first Adam we received the ability to function in the material world around us – While Jesus brought us the power to rise above this world and do the godly things of the spirit!

Brothers and Sisters, the whole purpose of our existence is to give glory to God. It is to return God's love by honoring and serving Him in all that we do. It is to take the blessings we have received and return them to God by the way we serve and bless others. Hopefully, this will lead them closer to God, whom they might not know or, perhaps, even deny.

What is most extraordinary, are the last lines of today's passage from St. Luke. If we stop judging others, we will not be judged! If we stop condemning, we will not be condemned! If we forgive, then we will be forgiven! And if we are generous and give, we will be gifted in return with a generosity that is beyond what we can begin to imagine!

So, let us pray, that, somehow, we can become all that Jesus and the Father ask us to be. And may the Holy Spirit always be there to inspire us and guide us in this growth!

Amen.

