

15TH SUNDAY -ORD. (B)
GOD'S PLAN IS TO UNITE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

St. Paul reveals some mysteries of God's will. "God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens. He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before Him, and destined us in love to be His sons and daughters, according to the purpose of His will". So the mystery surrounding the will and plan of God is that at the end of everything, all creation will be united in Him through Christ.

This shows how rich we are in Christ. We are blessed and made adopted children. At the time of Amos, Bethel, the religious seat had become a corrupt city. The king and the priest, with the other rich people, were living a luxurious lifestyle at the expense of the poor and the needy. There was corruption, and immorality. The statutes of God were ignored, and they lived the way that pleased them.

God was not pleased with what was going on so He called Amos, who was a shepherd and a dresser of sycamores to warn them. But Amaziah the priest tried to prevent him from delivering God's message. A farmer was to do the work of a priest who should have known better. Amos then told Amaziah what was going to happen to him and his family for refusing to heed to what he was sent to tell them - a disaster would befall on them.

Jesus continued to remind us of what we should be and so He sent the twelve in pairs to preach repentance. There was an urgency in the proclamation of the word that was why the disciples were not to take anything but to wear sandals. Nothing should distract them from the preaching of the word of God. Again they were sent in twos for support.

Jesus told His disciples not to waste time on those who would not accept them but to leave and to shake off the dust on their feet as a testimony against them. Jesus wanted everybody to know the plan of God and so the action of shaking off the dust was to indicate that He had done His part to bring everybody to His Father, but they had refused to accept it. It is like those who were invited to the wedding feast but some gave excuses of

marrying and others going to do their business (Mt.22:1-6).

Jesus knew His Father's plan and His will, so He told those He had fed with five loaves: "Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what He gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day" (Jn.6:37-39). So the unity of all creation at the end of time is the plan of God. Nothing should be lost. We can link this to what He told His disciples after the feeding of the five thousand men: "When they had had their fill, He said to His disciples, 'Gather the fragments left over so that nothing will be wasted'" (Jn.6:12). God does not want anything He has created to go waste, especially you and me.

But is it our aim or intention to unite ourselves to God at the end of time? Do we live as adopted children of God? Are we holy and blameless before God? Is the way we live our life falling in line with the plan and will of God? Are we wasting our lives away? We need to reform our lives so that we can also reach out to others.

Amos was not a prophet, all the same he could do what prophets did; but we are prophets by the virtue of our baptism; how are we living as prophets and how are we playing our roles as prophets in society? He was not afraid to speak the truth to the people. Like the people of the Northern Kingdom, many people in the present age need prophets. We are to be God's messengers to our brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, husbands and wives, children and grandchildren. They should also know the plan of God for them.

The disciples were to be selfless in preaching the gospel; so we are also to be selfless as Christians. Nothing should distract us from pursuing our goal of uniting ourselves to God. Food and clothing should not be obstacles in our way. Money and wealth should not take all our attention forgetting about the praise and worship we are to offer to God.

Once Jesus told His disciples: "You cannot be the slave both of God and of money. That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and what you are to wear. Surely life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are? Your heavenly Father knows you need them all. Set your heart on His kingdom first, and on God's saving justice, and all these other things will be given you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself" (Mt.6:25-34). "May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our heart that we might know what is the hope to which He has called us and how rich are the wonderful blessings He promises His people" (Eph.1:17-18).