

14TH SUNDAY ORD. (C)

IS MY NAME WRITTEN IN HEAVEN?

July 2/3, 2022

We all want lasting peace and happiness. Where can we find them? How can we attain them, and what are we doing to experience them? We can find all in the Lord. It is with Him that every desire of our heart can be realized, especially everlasting life of peace and joy.

In the first reading, Israel was promised prosperity and comfort from the Lord God. She would be carried like a child in its mother's arms. This would be experienced by all who mourned with her and loved her. Those who shared in her sorrows would share in her joy.

Salvation does not come cheap; it involves mourning and being poor in spirit. Earthly status and successes may not be enough to have one's name written in heaven. That was why St. Paul was saying that he was not interested in being circumcised or not. What was and is important is to be a new creation. Circumcision was very important for the Israelites, and it was a mark of membership or belongingness to the chosen race – Israel.

When the seventy-two returned from their pastoral assignment, they were happy that they could do wonderful things. But Jesus told them that those were not important. They should rejoice that their names were written in heaven. That is the most important achievement one should aim at.

How do I have my name written in heaven? First and foremost, it is to do the will of the Father. Jesus once told His disciples: "It is not anyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven. When the day comes, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, work many miracles in your name'? Then I shall tell them to their faces: I have never known you; away from me, all evil doers!" (Mt7:21-23). It is by doing God's will that you will be known by the Lord and have your name written in the book of life.

Moreover, one has to crucify oneself to the world like Paul. His greatest desire was to share in the sufferings of Christ which he knew would bring him salvation. That means one has to deny oneself of many things which go against his faith. One has to have delight in the word of the Lord. The word

comes with peace. That was why Jesus told His disciples to first give peace to every house they would enter. We are to receive the message with open heart, because that will bring us closer to the kingdom. We should not forget that refusing to accept the messengers of God and His word is a way of condemning ourselves as we heard that it would happen to the towns and places the disciples were to visit. Some of us find it difficult to accept the word and live by it because of intellectual pride like the Scribes and Pharisees; others because they want to hear something that sounds sweet in their ears; (2Tim.4:3ff). We don't want to hear anything that convicts us that will help us change our lives.

To have my name written in heaven I have to proclaim the word also and pray for others to share what they have received. St. Paul told the Romans: "Faith comes through hearing, and what is heard is the word of Christ" (Rom.10:17). So, it is important to share the word of God. That was what the seventy-two were sent to do so that people would know that the kingdom of God was near and that they should prepare to experience it. But how can I share what I don't have?

Is having my name written in heaven my aim in life? Is sharing the joys of Jerusalem my greatest desire? How does it affect my daily life and influence my spiritual activities especially my daily prayers? How does that influence my relationships with other people? Does my desire to experience the kingdom of God help me to avoid the occasions of sin, and always ready to repent from my sins?