



Come and See!

Week of August 28, 2022

The Word...

" Brothers and sisters: You have not approached that which could be touched and a blazing fire and gloomy darkness and storm and a trumpet blast and a voice speaking words such that those who heard begged that no message be further addressed to them. No, you have approached Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and countless angels in festal gathering, and the assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven, and God the judge of all, and the spirits of the just made perfect, and Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant."
(from Heb 12:18-19, 22-24)

Pondering the Word ...

If last week was "Hypocrite Week," this is a good follow-up: "Humility Week!" And we are talking about real humility here, not the false kind demonstrated by many hypocrites!

The author of the Letter of the Hebrews reminds their readers that the ancients experienced the all-encompassing presence of God on Mt. Sinai (Ex 19-20), so much so that they were completely chastened and "begged that no message be further addressed to them." (20:18-21). But we, the people of the New Covenant, experience the humble presence of the living God in Jesus, and enjoy the heavenly banquet replete with angels and the communion of saints, made perfect by God.

The ancients, though totally humbled at Sinai, still fell prey to pride and boastfulness, forgetting the God who saved them. How easy it is for those of us who have not experienced God's fearsome presence to fall prey as well, forgetting the example set for us by Christ!

Living the Word...

Really reflect on the readings this week. Look for the messages about humility that come through; some are very obvious and some, not so much so. If you talk to people who have survived natural disasters or been given a second chance at life, most would say they have a newfound sense of humility. You will also hear this from people who have experienced mercy, for others and for themselves. I would go as far as to say that if you have not forgiven others or yourself for past mistakes, then you cannot be truly humble.

My favorite definition of humility is very simple and comes from C.S. Lewis: "Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It is thinking of yourself less." Humility is seeing yourself as God sees you: not perfect, not always polished, but a reflection of God's self even so. I can't think of anything more humbling than that.

Personal Reflections and Ideas ...

Mon, Aug 29: *"From your judgments, I turn not away, for you have instructed me."* (Ps 119; Septuagint) Today's selection from Psalm 119 (that's the really long psalm) doesn't sound too humble to me! The author is giving themselves lots of kudos for being attentive to God's law, but in the end, they give the credit to God. Humility doesn't mean we cannot take pride in our accomplishments. It means we NEVER forget from whom those blessings come! **Reflection/Provision:** Having pride and being prideful are two different things. This is an important lesson to teach our kids. God wants us to take pride in what we do with what we are given. But recognizing God's role in all we do also gives us permission to fail; to boast, as Paul says, in our weaknesses. Reflect today on a time when you did not turn away from God's judgment but allowed it to instruct you.

Tue, Aug 30: *"We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit from God, so that we may understand the things freely given us by God."* (1 Cor 2:10-16) This whole passage is interesting. In the previous verse, Paul says only you can really know the spirit that is within you: is it the spirit of the world or the Spirit of God? The spirit of the world can be prideful, but the Spirit of God knows what we are is freely given to us by God. **Reflection/Provision:** St. Ignatius of Loyola spends a lot of time in his Spiritual Exercises on discernment of spirits: Is it God who is calling to me, or another, worldly spirit that is tempting me? Where do I find a sense of peace (not necessarily comfort or happiness)? Is the spirit speaking to my ego or to my heart? It is not as cut-and-dry as you might think. Go to <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/making-good-decisions/discernment-of-spirits/> for several articles on discernment. (If you are struggling with a significant decision, you may want to seek out a spiritual director trained in Ignatian discernment.)

Wed, Aug 31: *The crowds went looking, and when they came to him, they tried to prevent him from leaving them.* (Lk 4:38-44) There are likely some in this crowd who want him to stay so they can learn and grow from his words, but I'd bet most just want to keep him all to themselves to perform miracles or do whatever they need him to do. (See Mt 11:23: the people of Capernaum never allowed Jesus' mighty deeds to change their hearts.) Anyone who truly learns from Jesus knows they cannot keep him all to themselves. They cannot put him in a box. **Reflection/Provision:** I fear we will be judged harshly for our continuing divisions of the Body of Christ into denominations and sects, the modern version of tribes (see today's reading from Corinthians for an early example). What do you think? Do you ever consider another denomination's view of Christ to be "wrong?" Reflect today on what is really important, the real reason for the Incarnation: Christ's message of love.

Thu, Sep 1: *Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid."* (Lk 5:1-11) **Reflection/Provision:** Simon Peter sees his doubt as sin. Jesus sees in Simon's doubt an opportunity. He invites him to follow, to learn; to stumble, to doubt again, to deny him, to sin. *"When Jesus first set eyes on Simon...he saw in him what no one else would have thought was there and nicknamed him the Rock—so Peter changed eventually, becoming what the nickname said he was. What kind of name or names does Jesus find for me?"* (Anthony De Mello, from *Wellsprings*, p. 93)

Fri, Sep 2: *"Take delight in the LORD, and he will grant you your heart's requests."* (Ps 37) **Reflection/Provision:** This verse made me consider: When is the last time my prayer involved taking delight in God? What does it even look like to take delight in God? Too often, it has to do with what *I think* is my heart's request being granted. Today, I will spend as much time as I can delighting in God—just that. No intentions, no breast-beating, not even praise and thanksgiving. Just delighting in God. I'm going to give it try...how about you?

Sat, Sep 3: *"Some Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the sabbath?"* (Lk 6:1-5) The elders challenge Jesus about his disciples breaking Sabbath law (picking grain to eat), but Jesus reminds them of when King David violated the law even more egregiously to feed his starving companions. In the next passage, Jesus asks the Pharisees directly: *"Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath,"* even if that means breaking some of the ritualistic rules that you have made more important than mercy? He says something that could be interpreted as very prideful: *"The Son of Man is the lord of the Sabbath."* **Reflection/Provision:** What do you think Jesus means by this? In Mk 2:27, Jesus tells us *"the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath,"* so that if someone is hungry or suffering, is it not God's will that we care for them over the Sabbath rest that is intended for us to reflect on God's blessings anyway? Look to the Son of Man and his example of what Sabbath really means!