

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Aug 20th 2013

The Old Testament story of Gideon is my story, probably all of us can relate to this one. I love the words of the angel of the Lord to Gideon while he was hard at work grinding wheat one day. “The Lord is with you, O champion!” I can imagine this happening to me. My response would be similar to Gideon’s response. “What do you mean, “Champion?” I’m just stuck here at work that never makes a difference....except to keep me fed. There must be more to life if I am supposed to be a champion.”

I’m thinking along the same lines as Gideon in this story. The Lord has done wonderful things for me, that is true, but now what? I am just not one of the movers and shakers in the world. But the Lord has an answer to our doubts just as with Gideon’s doubts. The Lord says, “Go with the strength you have and do what needs to be done, because I am sending you.” And we like Gideon say, “I don’t have much strength, I’m really pretty insignificant.” And the Lord says, “I’ll be with you.” And we say, again like Gideon, “OK, but give me a sign.” And the Lord does.

My reflections today are about the signs that the Lord is with us. We will see them if we trust in God.

What is important here is that God is with us, not that we get stronger. It is about God’s strength and not ours. We don’t get very far if we ask for strength to go it alone to do what we want to do. We all know that. But we are champions if we go with God where God needs us to go. When we hear what God wants us to do, we read in the Psalm for today that miracles will happen. We will see the signs.

We will be champions! Accompanying our faithfulness and hopefulness will be truth and justice, springing out of the earth and down from heaven. Wow! It is all there if we look for it.

There is more. We can inherit eternal life. But we can’t do that by ourselves either. Jesus reminds us that it is impossible on our own; only with God. Still, I can’t help but think that trusting in God to deliver is only half of the human story. It is what we want God to deliver that is the problem. Most of us want something other than what God promises to provide us. We want earthly riches, power, and recognition of it all more than we want peace and justice and eternal life. We really think we can enjoy wealth and power more than we can peace and justice. The Gospel story for today reveals that Jesus understood that.

So the other half of the human story is about our desiring to follow Jesus. But that too is not all up to us....Jesus reminds us that it is impossible for our desires to be made perfect without God. For the sake of the name of Jesus we do our best, but we must rely on God to be with us to stay on track. So today, and every day, we can stop to pray at work in gratitude for the Lord’s presence. Just listen for the angel saying, “The Lord is with you, O champion!” Then we can get our priorities straight and get back to work....God’s work.

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