

## Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Jul 1st 2014

We humans are so insecure when it comes to “how are we doing?” with God and life in general. I think we are also pretty childish in our relationship with God, I know that is true for me. It is easy to think about God’s judgment when we read Old Testament lessons like the words in Amos today.

“Prepare to meet your God” fills us with trepidation, and well it should. We are all guilty of some “crimes.” But Amos also reports that the Lord says, “I will deal with you in my own way.” What does that mean? What hope is there for us? If we read further, we find that the Lord God has a plan for us, and God won’t do anything without revealing it to us. Why should that give us comfort?

I think the readings for today are not about God’s judgment of our wickedness so much as they are about our relationship with God. God’s plan for us is a relationship of security and joy. The readings today are about what God wants from us in that relationship and a call to focus on those expectations rather than focusing on our shortcomings. The Psalm for today helps us with that focus. If we ask expectantly for the Lord to lead us in justice, we will receive abundant mercy and can enter into the Lord’s holy temple. To be sure, we remain in fear, but it is more about respect that brings us into the presence of God than terror over punishment for our shortcomings.

To me, these lessons lead us to the storm upon the sea with Jesus and the disciples. While we need to be aware of the storms in our own lives as a result of our sins, we should also be aware of God’s presence and mercy in the midst of these storms. Rather than be terrified, Jesus calls us to greater faith. We should respond in such a manner in the midst of all that frightens us, not just our own sins, but the sins of others that direct harm our way. That is not easy, but if we keep in mind that the Lord has a plan for us, it has been revealed, and the Lord will deal with evil in his own way, we really don’t have anything to fear. We don’t have to worry about judgment. Instead, we need to focus on doing justice and letting God be God. Everything will work out fine in God’s time. But, because we are human, that is easier said than done.

So today, I am focusing on all the times in my life, when it really did work out that way. I often forget that and so daily reading and reflection of the Bible lessons are helpful to me. I am reminded today that I need to demonstrate more faith so I am not constantly waking Jesus up from a nap with all my little problems. I remember when my father used to take a nap on Sunday afternoon. Nothing annoyed him more than when we kids woke him up with crying because one of us did something we weren’t supposed to do to another one. We would all get in trouble. So we learned how to get along with each other. I think that is what God expects from us on a larger scale. If we have a strong faith relationship with God, we will seek greater confidence in the ways of the Lord’s justice instead of responding to life’s problems with judgment of others and fear of our own shortcomings.

