

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jul 24th 2014

“Trust in the LORD and do good,

that you may dwell in the land and be fed in security.

Take delight in the LORD,

and he will grant you your heart’s requests” Psalm 37: 3-4

Today’s First Reading and Responsorial Psalm hammer home some important aspects of faith: confidence, trust, and commitment. Through a trusting, confident, and committed faith we find salvation in the Lord. For me, unlike the image of the mustard seed in today’s Gospel, it takes hard work to develop and cultivate these traits and, without the proper attention, they can disappear quickly. These things do not “sprout and grow” naturally in me – they exist tenuously and need constant effort to preserve and flourish. When I am overcome with anxiety – about my health, work, relationships, finances, etc. – I lose confidence in my connection to the Lord and let fear control my life. When I see suffering and poverty in our world, I doubt whether the Lord really stands by each of us all the time. When I am surrounded by a culture bankrupt of moral values, I am tempted to forgo my commitment to Christ and to “take the easy way out.”

I might not face physical persecution for my beliefs, but maintaining a strong faith in God requires strength in the midst of my complex humanity and our busy societies. Surrendering control is the hardest thing for me to do, but I know that doing so is critical to finding the confidence to trust and commit to the Lord. Building trust in God requires exercising my “faith” muscles: trust a colleague on a project at work, confide in a loved one, stand up for my values when it’s hard to do so. If I cannot trust others or myself on the simple things in life, how can I expect myself to commit to the Lord on the ultimate questions of life?

Strong faith is a challenge for us all, whether new to faith or a lifelong believer. Today I pray for the courage to take that “leap” of faith and trust, commit, and have confidence in the Lord.

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