

## Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, May 26th 2015

Both today's Old Testament Reading and Gospel promise greater rewards if we are willing to give. I hear an evolution in the meaning of this reward as we go from Sirach to the Psalm to the Gospel of Mark.

The first reading makes the point that obedience to the law has an importance similar that of making an offering. For these actions a greater reward is promised. My sense is here earthly benefits are being promised. In the selections from the Psalm the reward is for praise and sacrifice and this reward can be understood as salvation. In the Gospel message the reward that is promised is clearly beyond this physical world.

The passage previous to today's reading from the Gospel of Mark provides the description of the interaction between a wealthy man and Jesus. The man says that he is obedient to the law and wishes to know what else is needed. Jesus asks him to give up his things in service of the poor. This is difficult for the man. Today's New Testament reading then begins with Peter saying how he and the other disciples have given up their worldly possessions in becoming His followers.

Today I find myself reflecting on my "stuff." My project for the day is cleaning the basement, sorting the things that have been accumulated over time. After that I need to cut the lawn. I think about how much time we spend on our "stuff," earning money to accumulate it and taking time to maintain it. We build emotional attachments to these things. I recall the frustration and sadness that my wife and I felt the other day when we went out to the parking lot at work and found a small dent in our car.

Where does my time and effort go? Is it in service of the Gospel or does it go the collection of things? My belief is that an accounting of the potential rewards discussed in today's readings is the wrong place to start. I believe the first step is to recognize our many gifts and respond with gratitude. I see my blessings as a call to service. I wish I did a better job at heeding this call. My prayer today is focuses on this gratitude and asking for strength in responding.

Dear Lord,

We live in a world where it is too easy to forget the source of our many gifts. Help me to recognize the order of Your work and the call of Your plan as I engage with the things of this earth. I become too busy and can forget what should be the true point of my actions. I often am bogged down with concerns about my "stuff". Help me to remember why these things are here and to use my gifts in the service that you intended. Sometimes I fear that the more that I have, the less I trust. Pentecost's reminder of Your gift of the Holy Spirit in support of human efforts brings genuine consolation.

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