

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Aug 9th 2015

Despite the fact that we are often discouraged, our journey through life is always blessed. Like Elijah, we often lose heart in our work and our relationships. But the Lord is with us and sustains us. We can trust that God is with us at all times and therefore we can bless the Lord at all times. Indeed the Psalm reminds us to “taste and see the goodness of the Lord.” People of faith do that in the celebration of the Eucharist and the celebration of relationships with others. Those celebrations are not about how good we are, but the good we become in the community of faith. All of us who fear the Lord can testify that there have been times in our lives when we were delivered from our distress by angels.

And there have also been many times when we have suffered from distress of all sorts. Our faith is not about living a life free of distress, but living a life of faith, love and gratitude in our relationships with God and with others no matter what happens to us. One of my former pastors says, “Life isn’t about how well we weather the storms, but how often we dance in the rain.”

But how can we come to such an attitude of gratitude and resilience? So often our human frailty leads us to grieve the Holy Spirit of God by grumbling and complaining about our difficult journeys through life. When we experience even the slightest distress, we so easily become bitter, angry, malicious, and unforgiving. What does it take for us to develop attitudes of love and gratitude? Why would we want to try to imitate God when we know we will fail?

The Gospel lesson for today tells us that we can’t do it by ourselves. We need Jesus. And we find Jesus through the teachings and Word of God. It is through our communion with him, in him, and through him in the eating of the bread of life that his flesh becomes the life of the world. It is in our relationships of love with each other and our listening to God and learning from God that we experience Jesus among us. In our simple day-to-day lives of being kind to one another, compassionate, and forgiving one another, we are empowered to be imitators of God. So, at the end of each day, when we give thanks for all of our blessings, most of all, we should give thanks to God for the presence of Jesus in our lives. We should acknowledge our gratitude for the way that the presence of Jesus in our lives empowers us to imitate God. Today I also pray a prayer of gratitude for the thousands of reflection readers who use the work of this ministry to seek Jesus through the teachings and the Word of God. I am also very grateful to those of you who affirm our efforts to challenge and affirm your journeys through life. You, dear readers, are imitators of God in your faithful and prayerful lives of faith. Our relationships with readers within this faith community at Creighton University bless us and sustain each of us. More personally, your kind affirmations of my work over the years have certainly helped me to “taste and see the goodness of the Lord.” Thank you.

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