

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Nov 19th 2015

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Today. What other day is there? It is tempting to think that I have many more Todays ahead of me. Today I attended the funeral Mass for a deacon friend who died from cancer at age sixty-six. Just this past week (as I write this) the Creighton community grieved over the deaths of three current students and a former student. The former student had worked in the law library. I remember her smiling face, full of life, joy, and hope. But she barely made it into her twenties. Today. Both of these individuals had it and then it was gone. I have it but for how long?

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How much longer will I have Today? Most of the time I think I would like to know the answer to that question. Hezekiah was the king of Israel, got deathly ill, and was told that he should prepare to die. He prayed to the Lord and God gave him fifteen more years of life. How healthy would that be for me spiritually to know that I had fifteen more years? Would I waste time thinking that, no big deal, another Today will arrive? Or would I maximize my efforts to grow spiritually and accomplish great things for God, knowing that I had the time to do it? I really cannot answer my own question. However, it is all hypothetical. For me, all I have is Today.

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In the first reading for Today we hear about the Jewish rebellion against a king who tried to force them to give up their faith. In doing this, they essentially sacrificed their future. Now they would be hunted as outlaws. They could not live in their homes. They had to abandon their possessions. They could not worry about whether or not their retirement investments were doing okay. Their daily activity was simply to stay alive. Each day that they awoke they knew that Today could be their last Today.

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The psalmist proclaims that we should offer to God our sacrifices of praise in time of distress. However, sometimes distress causes me to think that the bad times will never end. Everything is going to pot and it is Groundhog Day over and over again. The stress never ends. It is a Today that I wish would go away. Sometimes my heart hardens. Why are you allowing this to happen to me, God? If you loved me, surely you would take the distress away. I have served you faithfully and you reward me with this? God says, “call upon me in time of distress; I will rescue you, and you shall glorify me.” Well, Today I cannot do this. I am stewing – I am feeling sorry for myself – maybe I will feel like calling upon you Tomorrow. “But you only have Today.”

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Jesus wept over a city that had rejected him. God had visited his people and they did not recognize him. Jesus wanted to give the city an eternal Today of peace. But it was not to be. Sadly, the city would have future Todays but those Todays would see the tragic destruction of the city Jesus loved so much. Today came. God visited. They did not recognize him and then killed him. The Today of God's

visitation would be no more.

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George Butterfield-Creighton University's Law School Library