

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jun 23rd 2016

The first reading for today sounds remarkably familiar to what is going on in our world today. The names are different, but the chaotic, destructive events that are occurring are the same. I remember when 9/11 occurred, as everyone does. At that time I had 1 child who was away at college, 2 in high school, and 1 still in grade school. I was anxious to have contact with the child in college and was fortunate to reach him the first evening. There was absolutely no reason for him to be unsafe, but I needed reassurance. Like most families, for days on end we had the television on all the time trying to understand and make sense of such destruction. Two things finally occurred to me. First, there was not going to be a reason identified that made sense to me. The devastation that continues to occur in some countries falls under the same umbrella. These awful events are occurring for no reason that we can understand. Second, my youngest did not need to see one more replay of the towers falling and I needed to protect him from the inconceivable events in any way I could. When I read this first passage, I can only imagine the mothers. The descriptors in the passage are frightening: “a city under siege”; “The king..., together with his mother, surrendered”; Mothers who had to be worried about where their children were or how to feed them with all the treasures “carried off”.

I believe the gospel for today was assigned to me as an “angel moment”, or as a “for Pete’s sake, pay attention moment”. Since last fall I have been faced with a variety of challenges. They have included some significant poor choices being made by a beloved child, to a badly broken wrist, to a recent diagnosis of cancer. With each new challenge I found myself pulling further and further from God. I don’t believe God caused these things to happen to me.

However, as each new challenge occurred and I floundered more, He was not reaching down and saving me. I found it more and more difficult to pray as no one seemed to be listening. Of course, listening from my perspective meant an answer that I wanted to hear. Obviously “the winds blew and buffeted the house” and I was a fool who had built on sand. Hopefully this humility will allow me to rebuild a house on rock or refortify where any rock I might have as a foundation has been damaged.

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