

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Feb 15th 2017

How shall I make a return to the LORD for all the good he has done for me?

The cup of salvation I will take up. God is full of mercy and abounds in steadfast love for his children. However, he does not force us to love him. He wants us to follow him into a life of peace and joy but we have the freedom to do as we please. He sets before us a cup. In it is salvation. It is everything any of us will ever want or need to live a fulfilling life. If we take and drink from this cup, we will be transformed into the image of God which was given to us at conception and lost because of sin. On the other hand, he also places before us another cup – the cup of his wrath. If we drink from this cup, we spiral downward into a life of desolation and gloom. This cup places us on the broad path that leads to eternal destruction. Jesus is the only one who could drink from this cup and not die. Instead of the cup passing from him, the Father allowed Jesus to drink from this cup and through his sinless life and resurrection from the dead, destroy the wrath in that cup. We are spared from drinking this cup to the dregs because of Jesus' atoning sacrifice. I make a return to the Lord for the good he has done for me by drinking from the cup of salvation instead of the cup of wrath.

I will call upon the name of the LORD. When somebody does something good to me, what do I do? Do I thank them? Do I respond in kind? What if I totally ignored them? I am about to die in a burning house, you rush in, putting your own life at risk, pull me out to safety through the raging flames, and my response in return is to ignore you. What can we do in return to the Lord who has saved us? Call upon him, talk to him, hang out with him, pay attention to him.

My vows to the LORD I will pay in the presence of all his people. God has done so much good for me. What can I do to pay him back? Keep my word. What I say I will do, I do. I do not have to make vows but, when I make them, I keep them.

Precious in the eyes of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones. If you think about it, can we really pay God back for what he has done for us? What God wants is for us to be faithful. That does not mean that we are sinless or perfect in everything, only that we keep following him, listening to him, and never give up until the day we die. God does not love death. In fact, he has destroyed it. But he loves to see his children live faithful lives and, when they close their eyes in death, that, to him, is precious.

In the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem. In a world which strives to silence the voice of the faithful, we repay the Lord's goodness to us by not being afraid to live for him in the public arena, in the midst of Jerusalem. That includes the courts of his house and the city streets. Our faith is not private. We are not shadow disciples. We are salt and light in this world. We are not afraid.

To you, Lord, I will offer a sacrifice of praise. When someone does good for us, most of us sing their praises. The almighty has done great things for us and holy is his name. We are called to be priests in the kingdom of our great God and we offer sacrifice with our lips. Lord, you are holy. Lord, you are worthy. Lord, your goodness endures forever. Amen