

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Nov 29th 2017

Is it really possible to keep our focus upon Jesus? Or is it more likely that we let our focus slip onto what the world demands of us? To simply overlook all of the blessings He continually pours into our lives? Does it make sense that we can “forget” the God of the universe, even for a second?

In today’s lectionary we see a shocking episode of the consequences of ignoring God and delegating Him to an insignificant status in our life. King Nebuchadnezzar had built a massive kingdom and mistakenly believed that he alone was responsible for all the blessings in his life. He had seen God’s power first hand in the fiery furnace episode. Yet, in spite of that experience it took a second supernatural event to open his eyes. Through a dream and Daniel’s explanation of that dream, Nebuchadnezzar learned a second very hard lesson about the reality and power of our God. Nebuchadnezzar lost everything. Following that experience, Nebuchadnezzar finally came to grips with the reality of the God of the universe.

Those experiences had to impact Nebuchadnezzar’s family, especially his children. Yet in the 5th chapter of Daniel, we find once again how easy it is to overlook God when things are going well. Nebuchadnezzar’s son, Belshazzar, was now the king and was enjoying a carefree life. He had forgetting all the lessons God had taught his father. So once again, we see a supernatural message delivered to Belshazzar - a dire message of his impending doom. God had run out of patience and Belshazzar paid with his life the very day that Daniel interpreted God’s message to him.

So is this story really relevant for us? As the Responsorial Psalm so strongly points out, all of God’s creation shouts of the reality of the God of the universe. How then could we overlook His presence in our lives, even for a second? Yet that is exactly what I seem to do far too often. I tend to let the pace of my life overwhelm me, all the things that have to be accomplished each and every day, the demands of family, work, and life. As with both Nebuchadnezzar & his son, God has provided me with so many strong clear messages. The God of the universe has been un-mistakenly engaged in all aspects of my life – in good times and in the challenging times, His presence and blessings have been unmistakable. His power and presence palpable. Yet looking back at the end of each day, it disturbs me greatly to see how often I forget to look to Jesus first - in everything. I try to meet challenges on my own in lieu of clinging to God and looking to Him for both direction and comfort.

The Revelation verse for today reminds us of why we follow our God and Savior – the promise of eternal life spent with Jesus. In the message from Luke, we are reminded that our walk with God is not going to be easy. That same world that I let distract me so often will relentlessly oppose my walk with God. Yet throughout this onslaught, God is never far away, he never abandons us – even down to the details of providing us with the very words to stand up to the world, to share our testimony, to let His love flow through us.

Dear Lord, help me to stay focused upon you throughout every second of this day. Keep my eyes open to your will and let your light shine boldly through me. Thank you for your everlasting love and your presence. In the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

