

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Jun 22nd 2016

I often read a verse in the King James Version to get a different perspective. I find it poetic and lyrical.

MT 7: 15-20---15. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? 17. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Matthew sets the tone right away. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing..." Beware those who would tell us lies that flatter us and that pander to our ego. It is easy to get caught in those lies. How do you know a false prophet? There are so many of them. We see them every day in the media. Television advertisements make us think we must worship politicians of one stripe or another, money, sex enhancement drugs, other drugs that claim healing and relief from age and on and on. It seems we are forever flailing against depraved desires and lusts. There are many false prophets out there and I'm inclined to believe I can easily deal with the spiritual distraction. For the most part that's true, but I count the false prophets as those who daily confront us on TV. There are hundreds, which is a believable number if you also believe Elijah who said there were 850 false prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:19). At any rate, I find myself particularly susceptible to the false money prophets. They make me feel as if I am not putting enough away for my golden years. They make me forget those who are truly needy. When I'm tempted to follow a false prophet I pray for strength to resist the temptation. One of the Responsorial Psalm verses for June 22 reads "Turn away my eyes from seeing what is vain: by your way give me life." I talk with friends and confidants since there is always strength in numbers. I talk to my minister for comfort. Ultimately, I talk to God. And, ultimately I should be following Jesus and not a false financial prophet.

What keeps me on the straight and narrow is the belief that if God is with me who can be against me? Belief in Jesus and God trumps false prophets every time. In this era where we are constantly bombarded by false prophets we need a wake-up call. We need to be reminded that we must follow Jesus but if we do that it means following alone. In other words, God can only be served consciously while Satan can be served both consciously and unconsciously.

Joshua 24:15 says it very well and is that wake-up call I alluded to earlier. "And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."