

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to John (John 15:16)

It was not you who chose Me, but I Who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My Name He may give you. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – To be successful in the eyes of God

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in Me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without Me you can do nothing (John 15:5). The Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit is dwelling in our souls. How strong His presence is in us will depend on our personal relationship with Christ. A strong relationship with Christ will result in a strong presence of the Holy Spirit in our soul and in a life that is led by the Spirit. However, if we find ourselves loving and craving for the same things that the rest of the world loves and craves for, we can be sure we have not given the Spirit a free rein over our lives. *For those who live according to the flesh are concerned with the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit with the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5).* The desires of the flesh tend towards sin and sinfulness whilst the desires of the Spirit tend towards grace and holiness. The fruits which the Holy Spirit produces in us if we open our hearts to obedience to God's commandments are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (cf. Galatians 5:22-23). Thus, how successful our life is in the eyes of God will depend on how successful we are in forming our character and developing Christian virtues that are needed to make us fitting to be children of God and ready for heaven.

Will our work withstand the purifying test of God's fire on the last day? *If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, the work of each will come to light, for the Day will disclose it. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each one's work (1 Corinthians 3:12-13).* We have to decide for ourselves which kingdom we will channel all our energy and resources in building up. Is it God's Kingdom which will require us to walk by faith on the straight, narrow true path to lay gold, silver and precious stones on the foundation of Christ? Or are we more inclined to pursue the same things as the rest of the world, walking on the broad, easy road of compromise and sin, producing only work of wood, hay or straw in the eyes of God? Human achievement that produces admiration and great recognition in human eyes may not be judged the same by God and may even be rejected by Him. *What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? (Matthew 16:26).* In God's eyes the whole physical world is simply not worth one human soul whose price of redemption is the Precious Blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

There is need of only one thing (Luke 10:42). On Jesus' visit to Mary and Martha, Martha who was burdened with so much serving, complained to Jesus and asked Him to ask Mary who sat at the Lord's feet, listening to Him, to help her in the work. Instead, Jesus said to Martha: *Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.* (Luke 10:41-42). In many ways we are like Martha, we concentrate on the trees so much we cannot see the forest. Indeed, only one thing is needed. Once we got our priorities in the right order, all other things will also flow smoothly in the correct order. We came from God, and we are on our journey back to God. We owe life and all the good things in our life to God. God redeems us from our sins at great sacrifice to Himself. God deserves our highest loyalty and allegiance, loving obedience and all the love our hearts can muster. Thus, Jesus says to us: Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all the things we need will be given us (cf. Matthew 6:33).

God desires obedience out of love from all His children. When King David was dying, he gave this advice to his son, Solomon: "Keep the mandate of the Lord, your God, walking in His ways and keeping His statutes, commands, ordinances, and decrees as they are written in the law of Moses, that you may succeed in whatever you do, and wherever you turn." (cf. 1 Kings 2:3). David did not advise his son to expand his kingdom, build up his army and conquer other lands but his formula for success was to obey God and follow Him. Solomon followed his father's advice at least for most of his reign and enjoyed many blessings from the Lord. A great useful lesson for us from King David!

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, how successful I will be in God's eyes will depend on how closely my heart resembles Yours, and how closely I live my life in imitation of Your time on earth. The formula of success You give me is to love God with everything I am and have, and to see You in others, loving them as I love myself. Place in my soul an abiding love of You and the great desire to serve You all the days of my life. Grant that the joy of my heart is to please You. Help me seek You in everything that I do so that everything I do will be for the glory of God. Mary, Refuge of Holy Love, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.