



### **Scripture nugget – Answering and treasuring God’s higher calling**

*One of his fellow guests on hearing this said to Him, “Blessed is the one who will dine in the kingdom of God.” He replied to him, “A man gave a great dinner to which he invited many. When the time for the dinner came, he dispatched his servant to say to those invited, ‘Come, everything is now ready.’ But one by one, they all began to excuse themselves. (Luke 14:15-18).*

**The lure and enticements of the world render many souls restless with unholy desires and preoccupations that could not withstand the test of eternity.** Consumerism, materialism, the relentless pursuit of earthly wealth, power, human esteem, popularity, gratification of bodily pleasures and unruly passions, impure entertainment, etc. all serve to tie down the heart, mind and soul to earthly concerns, leaving no room or freedom to seek the Truth or discern the higher calling of God. God desires everyone to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (cf. 1Timothy 2:4). In the parable of the sower (cf. Matthew 13:1-9), Jesus explains to His disciples the things that work against our salvation. In the first instance of the seed, which represents the Word of God, falling on the path and eaten immediately by birds, Jesus explains that the Word of God is not accepted and is quickly taken away by the devil. The second instance of the seedling being withered on rocky soil reflects the shallowness of the faith which gives way once some little persecution is encountered. The instance of the seedling growing up amidst and being choked by thorns represents the faith being stifled by too much anxieties and worries of life.

**The personal encounter with Christ, and the value of relationship with Christ.** What causes a soul to become fervent with faith and love of God or lukewarm and indifferent? Part of the answer can be inferred from the life of St Paul, a most ardent missionary of Christ who was martyred for his untiring and zealous proclamation of the salvation offered by Christ. St Paul had a personal encounter with Christ. Before his conversion, St Paul was actively persecuting the followers of Christ. Then he was struck temporarily blind by a dazzling light on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians. Though he cannot see Christ, he heard Christ speaking to him. After this incident, St Paul turned his energy from persecuting Christians to the mission of announcing the Good News of Christ. St Paul had a great understanding of the value of friendship of Christ. St Paul said: *More than that, I even consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have accepted the loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ (Philippians 3:8).* St Paul possesses the truth that escapes many lukewarm souls that gaining Christ is the mission, purpose, fulfillment and eternal joy of one’s life.

**Conversation with Jesus:** Precious Lord, You put me on earth in order to prepare me for a life of eternity with You in heaven, my true home where no mind can ever imagine the things God planned for those who love Him (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9). Help me look honestly into my life and see how prepared I am for eternity. Forgive me my sins which have caused indifference and hardness of my heart. Give me the will, courage and strength to break away from apathy and indifference and the bondages that prevent me from arising from earthly distractions. Fill me with Your Spirit and help me to seek You, to encounter You, to experience Your love so that I too can be totally transformed like St Paul. Mary, Protectress of the faith, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.