

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Mark (*Mk 1:14-20*), *The Calling of the First Disciples*

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the Gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfilment. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel." As He passed by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother, Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, "Come after Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Then they left their nets and followed Him. He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother, John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then He called them. So they left their father, Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed Him. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection ~ Is my house built of hay and straw?

Then they left their nets and followed Him. When Jesus called the first disciples, they immediately stopped what they were doing and followed Jesus. No one had asked for time off to finish unfinished business. They had demonstrated that they were worthy disciples of Jesus Christ. *But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."* (Luke 9:62).

God is calling you and me. There is real urgent work to be done in building up God's kingdom in the hearts of all on earth. The Lord is calling everyone to follow Him. He has a vocation for everyone. For some it is a calling to priesthood and religious life. For the others it is a calling to either a married or single life. Whether it is a religious or non-religious life, it is no less a vocation, a calling by the Lord. In this calling is His unique plan for my life. It is the path that He maps out for me personally, a path that will lead to personal holiness, my sanctification required for the ultimate condition of my soul, my ultimate lasting happiness. I have no doubt that whatever vocation the Lord calls me to, it is indeed the best route to my final union with Him in heaven. To think otherwise is pure fantasy.

God's promises require a response. God's plan for me (cf. Jeremiah 29:11) is a plan of love, it is crafted by infinite love and wisdom, taking into account the uniqueness of my whole person. It cannot be accomplished automatically. It requires my cooperation, my surrendering my life to Him. I am called to build my life on the foundation which is Jesus Christ.

Consuming fire of Judgement Day. Eventually, what I place on the foundation which is Jesus Christ and build from what I place there will determine whether my house will stand the test of God's judgement. St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor. 3:10-15) warns that I should be careful how I build on that foundation. If anyone builds using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw his/her work will be shown up on Judgement Day because God's fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what one builds survives the fire, one will receive one's reward. At the end of the long day of my life, I would want my life efforts to show up as something precious in the eyes of God. I would like my time-consuming, sweating-producing efforts to be rewarded eternally and to give God glory. But if I am following my own plans, I run the danger that what I produce from my life may be revealed by God's judgement to be of useless hay and straw.

Conversation with the Lord

Precious Lord, in Your great love and wisdom, You will and plan the very best for me. However, I must be honest and admit that oftentimes I act as if I know the best, out of my own ignorance, weakness and not truly knowing You. It would be very sad indeed if I realise at the end of my journey on earth that my house is one of hay and straw. That after all I have gone through in life, difficulties and trials, my time-consuming, sweat-producing efforts have only yielded poor results that cannot stand before You. Teach me Lord to look at things at their eternal worth. Help me not to be attracted to activities that do nothing to build up Your kingdom but use me instead as Your little instrument. Assist me to answer Your calling to the plan You have for me. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, come to my aid always. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.