

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew (*Matthew 5:43-48*)

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as Your heavenly Father is perfect. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Surrender to Grace

Jesus said: “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Too often we forget about God’s graces working in us. We rely too much on ourselves and not surprisingly, feel discouraged at our weaknesses, falls and failures. St Paul begged the Lord to remove a certain weakness, a defect in himself to which the Lord responded by saying that His grace was sufficient for St. Paul to overcome it. Jesus wanted St. Paul to experience God’s power manifested in a perfect way through his own human weaknesses. If our hearts are open to the Lord, He is able to even bring glory to Himself through our human weaknesses. Weaknesses is part of our humanity as a result of sin. However, we need not feel discouraged as through God’s grace our weaknesses can manifest God’s perfect power working in us, through us and around us. God chooses weak, humble instruments in order to manifest the perfection of His power.

By grace we are empowered to love even our enemies. We are able to love because of God’s love poured into our hearts through the action of the Holy Spirit. *And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Romans 5:5).* The Holy Spirit in us is God’s mark of ownership of us. Through the Holy Spirit, God has already given us the capacity to love even our enemies when He commands us to do so. A person who does not understand our faith will think this command a folly, however such thinking is ignorant of the power of God’s graces working within us. We maybe earthen vessels, fragile and weak but we possess the power of the Truth (2 Corinthians 4:7).

By grace we are empowered to forgive as we have received forgiveness. There is a saying: To err is human, to forgive is divine. There is much truth in this saying. By our own merits we are unable to forgive those who hurt us. But when we receive forgiveness from God for our own sins, we are given the spiritual freedom to live in Christ’s righteousness and that includes the grace to be able to forgive the sins of those who hurt us. *God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).*

By grace we are empowered to rise above ourselves, break all the sinful bondages that imprison us in spiritual darkness. *Out of His fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given (John 1:16).* When Christ died on the Cross He did not merely blot out our sins but, just as importantly, also provide all the necessary graces to live a life in righteousness after our sins are forgiven. Thus Jesus said to the repentant sinner: Your sins are forgiven, go and sin no more (cf. John 8:11). No matter how entrenched and overpowering our sins are, Jesus provides the grace to break all sinful bondages and the opportunity to start a new life of grace. *Behold I make all things new (cf. Revelation 21:5).*

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, through grace You have rescued me from the dominion of darkness and transferred me into Your kingdom of light through the forgiveness of my sins, meriting me to share in the eternal inheritance (cf. Colossians 1:12-14). As the first installment of my heavenly reward, You have given me Your Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, 14) through Whom all graces are provided that I maybe holy as You are holy. Yes I am made for holiness as I am made for Your glory alone. Open my eyes, my mind and my heart, and enable me to respond to and cooperate with God’s graces working within me. Mary, my Mother and Mediatrix of All Graces, pray for me and intercede that I may be able to receive all the graces that I need in order to remain in God’s love and will every moment of my life. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.