

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to John (John 3:16)

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – We cannot be saved by good acts alone - we cannot be our own Saviour

If we can be saved by our own good acts by following our ‘good’ conscience, God the Father would not need to send Jesus to die in atonement for our sins. God, as a loving father, desires all His children to be saved and to know the Truth (Cf 1Timothy 2:4). The fullness of the Truth is Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son. Thus, God the Father provides His plan of salvation for each and every soul through the atoning act of Jesus Christ’s death on the cross. God the Father announced His plan of salvation in the Garden of Eden after the sin of Adam and Eve, saying to the ancient serpent: *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and Hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel.”* (Genesis 3:15). The woman refers to our Blessed Mother Mary and Her offspring, Jesus Christ.

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6). Jesus tells us in very simple terms that to go to heaven to be with God the Father we need to follow Him as our personal Lord and Saviour. The way of Jesus is the way of the Cross. Thus, Jesus says to us: *Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me (Luke 9:23).* It is only when we overcome our weaknesses and selfishness that we can accept all the discomfort and suffering that come with embracing the big and small crosses God sends our way every day. However, we take comfort that with every cross God sends, there accompanies it a corresponding amount of grace needed to overcome the rejection of the cross and to bear it meritoriously.

Salvation like everything else is a gift, it can never be earned through our own good efforts. *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).* Through His life, death and resurrection, Jesus gains for everyone all the graces we need to walk in the path of truth to salvation. Our very breath is maintained by His grace. God our Father says to us: *Listen to Him (Jesus)*(Cf. Matthew 17:5). Through His life, Jesus shows us how to live and love. Through His commandments and precepts, Jesus guides us to walk in fidelity on the path of truth. Thus Jesus says: *If you love Me, keep My commands (John 14:15).* Jesus tells us clearly how to get to heaven: *Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven (Matthew 17:21).* The will of God is encapsulated in His commandments and His Word.

Jesus says: Whoever denies Me before others, I will deny before my Father in heaven (Cf. Matthew 10:33). Jesus does not force His salvation upon us as our freewill is a most precious gift from Him. By His redeeming death on the Cross, He invites us, everyone is included, out of pure love to accept Him as our personal Lord and Saviour so as to merit the glorious inheritance God has planned for each of His children. God has prepared everything but the final act depends on us. Clothed in Jesus, we will stand in righteousness before the throne of God after our time on this earth is over for it is only through His Wounds that we are healed (cf. Isaiah 53:5).

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, out of infinite wisdom and love, You called me out of nothing to share a life of love, wonder and joy with You in our Father’s home. When sin entered the world starting with the disobedience of our first parents, You came in the flesh to restore God’s kingdom on earth through Your most loving, redeeming and saving sacrificial death on the Cross. Embracing You as my personal Lord and Saviour I accept with love and trust every cross big or small You send my way every day. As St Peter has said: our sufferings on earth cannot be compared to the joys we will have in our final home. Yes, our reward is a glorious inheritance. The Holy Spirit is our first instalment and the guarantee of our inheritance (Cf. Ephesians 1:14, Corinthians 1:22). Help me walk faith-filled and blameless in Your sight, focussing on the unending joy that waits me. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.