

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to John (John 14:27)

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection ~ Unholy Fear is not from the Lord

Unholy fear stems from our human sinfulness. It was only after Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit that unholy fear first entered the human heart. When the first act of rebellion and disobedience was completed, love flowed out from their hearts and unholy fear flowed in to take up the empty space. Thus, when God moved about the Garden on that day, Adam and Eve hid themselves in unholy fear on finding themselves naked without clothes. Guilt comes hand in hand with fear of punishment.

Unholy fear stems from our human weaknesses. Sins weaken us in all aspects. When our faith and trust in God are weak, we can be easily assailed by undue anxieties and worries. Thus, when confronted with a trial or an adversity, the difficulty of the situation becomes falsely magnified whereas God's mighty saving power and help are all but forgotten. Our problems become crushingly heavy because we are inclined to trust in and depend on our own capability and human power and try to bear it all ourselves. To those who do not take the time to develop a close relationship with God, God can appear to be a distant spirit that is hard on sinners and not the best friend any person can have. However, to anyone who can accept, Jesus offers His friendship (cf. John 15:15). And what a friend! One who not only died for us to bring us to heaven but also has the mighty power and unconditional love to help in any aspect of our human lives without the judgementalism and criticism of our fellow creatures.

Real peace and security cannot come from earthly treasures or human fellowship with others. In the whole of the universe, it is only Jesus who can bring us true peace. And this peace has a great personal price for Jesus. It is the price of His Blood. Through His Blood shed on the Cross and His holy death, Jesus gives us the divine power to overcome victoriously our sins, eternal death and hell. Only when this final victory is won, can real peace ensue. This means we are able with God's grace to overcome any situation, vice, evil bondage that acts against our glorious eternal inheritance and which robs us of the real peace that Christ wants us to have. That is why Jesus says of His peace: "I do not give to you as the world gives." The world simply cannot give the true peace that only Jesus can give.

Unholy fear can lead us to sin. Scripture has many examples of how unholy fear led to acts of great injustice against innocent people. King Herod gave the order to kill many innocent baby boys two years and under in Bethlehem and its vicinity because of his unholy fear of the newborn King of the Jews. Herod the tetrarch beheaded John the Baptist because he was afraid of the opinion of his courtiers if he did not fulfill the foolish promise He rashly made to Herodias's daughter. Pontius Pilate gave the command to crucify Jesus because of the pressure from the crowds. His unholy fear and cowardice led to the act of greatest miscarriage of justice in the whole of human history. How many times has fear of people's opinion stop us from doing the right thing?

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You are with me always till the end of time (cf. Matthew 28:20). Help me live in Your reassuring holy Presence always and especially in times of adversity. You promise You will be with me wherever I go (cf. Joshua 1:9). You are in my heart, at my side, all around me. *Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident (Psalm 27:3).* With sincere repentance for my sins, I have true freedom from my sinful past and all the unholy fears that it brings. Increase my faith and trust in You through the many trials You sent me. May I always be confident in Your promise that You will never forget me (cf. Isaiah 49:15), that You will surely help and uphold me with Your victorious right hand (cf. Isaiah 41:10). What can any situation or anyone do to me? Every moment of my future is designed by Your loving will. I enthrone You in my heart as the Lord of my life. In You I am more than a conqueror (cf. Romans 8:37). Cast out from my heart and mind all unholy and unlovely things so that I can never be afraid to follow Your will unconditionally. Mary, Mother of Salvation, give me a lion's share of your faith in God and holy boldness to always do the right thing irrespective of adverse human opinion. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.