

## Scripture Reading

### A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (*Matthew 22: 1-6*)

Jesus again in reply spoke to them in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. He dispatched his servants to summon the invited guests to the feast, but they refused to come. A second time he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those invited: "Behold, I have prepared my banquet, my calves and fattened cattle are killed, and everything is ready; come to the feast.'" Some ignored the invitation and went away, one to his farm, another to his business. The rest laid hold of his servants, mistreated them, and killed them. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

## Reflection – Making room for Jesus this Christmas

**Bondage to things of this world closes up the heart to God.** The world beckons us to myriads of activities that bear no relation to our calling. In the struggle to keep up with earthly desires, many souls simply do not have the time to answer God's calling to holiness. Gradually, the objects of their desire become their false gods: wealth, pleasures, amusement, power, fame, etc. Caught in this whirl of life, many are unable to extricate themselves to seek first the kingdom of God till God sends a great saving grace in the form of a tribulation. Painfully freed from earthly bondage, eyes are reopened to the truths of God and His loving call. *Therefore, I will allure her now; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak persuasively to her (Hosea 2:16).* It would be good if we constantly ask ourselves whether we have given God the time that is due to Him in order that we can grow in holiness to which we have been called.

**Lukewarmness closes the heart to God.** *So because you are lukewarm - neither hot nor cold - I am about to spit you out of My mouth! (Revelation 3:16).* God detests lukewarmness because it is indifferent to His love. It is difficult to touch a lukewarm heart. Such a soul has lost its previous fervor and ardor of its love and devotion to God, and has grown cold and indifferent. God ceases to come first, and is replaced by some other false gods. A lukewarm soul may still pray but only perfunctionally. One of the chief causes for spiritual lukewarmness is the inability to see the importance of and to maintain an interior life of constant prayer and sacrifices as called for by our Lord whose life on earth is the example for us to emulate. *Do not let your zeal subside; keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord (Romans 12:11).* If we do not treasure our faith, we will surely lose it.

**Unforgiveness and unrepented sins close the heart to God.** Unforgiveness is like a cancer of the soul. Without forgiving others, we cannot hope to be forgiven by God for our own sins. *But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions (Matthew 6:15).* Repentance is so important and necessary for our salvation that it was the topic Jesus started preaching in and it was his last topic of preaching on earth. Whilst God is always ready to forgive us of any sin if we approach Him in true repentance, we should always bear in mind that God's mercy comes with the condition of our repentance. Thus, we should never forget what Christ said to the sinner: Go and sin no more (cf. John 8:11, 5:14).

**Too much concerns and anxieties of life close the heart to God.** A soul living in anxiety and unholy fear of the future or in regret about the past is unable to avail of God's graces which are given to deal only with the present moment. Thus, God tells us: "Do not fear", "Do not worry" many times in Scripture. To allow our unholy fears to translate into our behaviour is a testament to our weak trust in God, His mercy and Providence. **Complacency and presumption of God's mercy close the heart to God.** Human nature usually uses two standards in measuring material achievement and spiritual achievement. A person may go to great lengths to advance a career but not to advance in holiness. Which achievement is eternal and more pleasing to God? It takes strength and wisdom to resist complacency in spiritual life and not to take God's mercy for granted. In the church community, is presumption of God's mercy somewhat manifested by the long queues of people receiving Holy Communion but short queues (if any) of people lining up for the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

**Conversation with Jesus:** Precious Lord, You said "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with Me (Revelation 3:20).*" If we can truly open our hearts to You, each and every day of our life will be a happy celebration of Your wondrous love for us! Our hearts are hardened by all the things that oppose Your holy love: unrepented sins, unholy fears, false gods sitting enthroned in our hearts, pride, selfishness, unforgiveness, preoccupation with earthly things, lukewarmness and complacency. Out of mercy and righteousness, please envelop all hearts in Your light of truth and enable all souls to empty their hearts of everything but their love for You. Then fill all hearts with Your love. Only then, can we render to You the love that only You deserve. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. [www.twohearts.hk](http://www.twohearts.hk)