

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Second Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (*2 Corinthians 5:5-7*)

Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection ~ It's not about our feelings. It's all about our faith.

The world goes way out to capture and gratify our senses. We are constantly bombarded with slick advertisements telling us how to look better, how to feel better, how to live. Much effort is spent in the promotion of products that aim at improving the appearance of the body. Advertisements are increasingly outrageous and tasteless as they try harder to capture the attention of tired consumers. To attract crowds, movies always have some racy content. Marketing of many products especially those targeted at men involve titillation of the senses as young attractive models in scanty dressing are used. Driven by self profit, the world is sadly deceived in all these empty endeavours. It is a case of empty minds chasing empty dreams.

Why the over-riding importance attached to feelings. In this aspect the situation can be summarised by the tagline: I feel, therefore I am. Many are directionless in life. Many are not on the true path that leads to the glorious inheritance God planned for them. As God is shut off from their world, their discernment of the difference between good and evil is blurred. The gift of true discernment is lost as self takes over. Instead of being led in faith by the Holy Spirit, the person is led by her/his feelings. Much effort is expended to ensure the good feelings of others in the seeking of a false peace. Thus, many parents, instead of exercising the divine authority bestowed upon them by God to guide and instruct their children to walk on the true path, preferred instead to treat their children like friends, allowing them to do whatsoever they feel like.

Many judge and act on feelings alone. *For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them (Matthew 13:15).* Though we may place much attention to our feelings, we may not be aware that most of the time we are spiritually blind and deaf due to our hardened hearts. As a result we take God's love for granted and do not really understand the gravity of sin and live lives that require spiritual healing in some unacknowledged areas. Some feelings if uncontrolled can lead us away from God and our salvation.

Truth remains unchanged irrespective of human feelings or opinions. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).* Jesus and the divine truths of His teachings remain unchanged irrespective of what will happen. Though we may feel alone at times, His promise to be with us always (cf. Matthew 28:20) stands forever. Though we may feel unloved, He reminds us that His love for us is everlasting (cf. Jeremiah 31:3). Though we may feel despair, our Lord reminds us that He has won the final victory for us (cf. Romans 8:37). Though we may feel we have no friends, the good Lord calls us His friends! (John 15:15).

Faith is the victory that will conquer the world (1 John 5:4). Faith is a free gift from God to those whose hearts are open to Him. It is not human rational thinking or logic or a loving sentiment. It is an active belief in the love, power and promises of God, and a life commitment to God in following all His teachings and precepts in every aspect of our daily life. It is not something we really understand but it is something we believe in and live it out. It is a way of life manifested in our mindset, in the desires of the heart, in the way we live our lives and the way we deal with others. It is derived from our love for God who must take precedence over all in our lives.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, I consecrate my entire self to You including my hardened heart and all my feelings. Help me recognise the feelings that do not come from You and give me strength to control it. I open my heart, my mind and soul to You that You may transform me into a true disciple of Yours: loyal, brave, and steadfast always upholding the truth. Purify my mind and heart. Correct my wrong way of thinking and impart to me Your wisdom. Magnify my faith in You, my love for You and hope and trust in You. Help me walk in faith, in humility and obedience to You. Help me understand that true faith is putting You first in everything that I do in every situation in my life. You promise that you will take care of the rest (cf. Matthew 6:33). Thank you for all the trials that will come my way to strengthen my faith. Mary, Mother of Salvation, the perfect disciple of Jesus, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You Jesus.