

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Proverbs (*Proverbs 37:3-5*)

Trust in the LORD and do what is good; dwell in the land and live securely. Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you your heart's desires. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in Him, and He will act. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Our Free Will holds the Key to Our Future

A great gift from God – our freedom through our free will. *God saw all that He had made, and it was very good (Genesis 1:31).* Our free will and soul are very precious gifts from God to every one of His children. It is through these gifts that we are like Him, made in His image. We have natural control over our actions in our earthly life and we are made eternal like God. Our physical bodies may die and decay at our deaths but our souls live forever! And we will be given a new glorified body in heaven if we are fit to enter heaven. Thus, our soul, though we cannot see it with our physical eyes, is the most precious possession we can ever have on earth. In its purest form in its sanctifying grace, each soul is like a tiny bit of God. This is how beautiful and breath-taking a pure soul is. It is only in this form that we are fit to enter heaven. God knows this and paves a way in His great power to safely guide His children to home with Him. However, God needs the full cooperation of each of His children to do this.

Would a father let his young child wander about by himself on a highway? God knows that freedom if utilized without responsibility can lead to great danger and harm for His precious children. For this God made a provision – He builds into the minds of His children a safety guard – the conscience – which can be likened to a meeting room of His child with God Himself though He remains concealed. Through this gift, God teaches interiorly the truth of the difference between good and evil as soon as a reasoning age is reached. However, as in all gifts, this gift is also vulnerable to neglect, being ignored or suppressed. How many of His children would suppress their conscience in order to satisfy the less than honorable desires of their selfish hearts? How many would render their conscience dead and ineffective in performing its function by becoming deaf to its voice by piling sins upon sins?

Would a father allow a selfish child to continue on the road to self-destruction? Would a father not try to form the character of His child? More so than a human father would, God actively tries to form the character of His child to ensure his/her eternal salvation. He humbles His child and tries to help them detach from themselves, from the blind pursuit of earthly riches and pleasures. Time and time again, He sends His children sickness, difficulties, sufferings, sorrows. These may take many different forms depending on the situation of His child. He will probably choose one that will impact on His child the most in order to teach a divine lesson geared towards the securing of eternal salvation. *My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline, and do not resent His rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those He loves, as a father the son He delights in (Proverbs 3:11-12).* As a loving father does not spare the rod, so God also does not. *What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit? (1 Corinthians 4:21).*

As we are eternal, we have to be aware of the eternal consequences of our actions. God is just and He will reward each according to his earthly actions. God *“will repay each person according to what they have done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, He will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger (Romans 2:6-8).* Hell and eternal damnation await those who reject God's love and mercy.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, with all my heart I thank You for creating me in Your image to share Your love and glory. Please take dominion of my heart and will. Pour Your divine love into my heart so that all my thoughts, words and actions will be guided only by Your divine love. *What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? (Matthew 16:26, Mark 8:36).* Let me not waste my time in pursuing the passing joys of this world but always to set my sight on the world that never ends – Your Kingdom of love, peace and joy, my rightful home and inheritance. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.