

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 3:5-6)

Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant - not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – The Lord Qualifies those He commissioned

God's ways are mysterious. When Jesus completed His mission on earth in offering to God His Father His death on the cross as a sacrificial offering for our sins, He left it to His apostles to continue His work of building up God's Kingdom on earth. He did not have a blue print or a detailed action plan to be executed by important, highly qualified and distinguished people. Instead, the individuals in the group of twelve apostles He has personally chosen could hardly be called confidence-inspiring. They were lowly, uneducated people, mostly fishermen by profession. Yet they were commissioned to build up God's Kingdom on earth. Is there a more important task than this? God trusted this group of lowly people.

God looks at the heart, not on the qualifications. The Jewish religious leaders in the days of Jesus missed His Visitation because they were not used to God's ways of doing things. Abraham must have been utterly amazed when God asked him to uproot himself to leave for a foreign land at a time when he was seventy years old with a barren wife. Abraham probably thought that at that juncture of his life, he would be prepared to settle down to a peaceful, quiet life, and that he was certainly not the candidate to carry out a great mission for God's kingdom. However, God's thinking is different. God does not need a virile, strong young man. However, He needs the heart of Abraham. God would provide the strength needed. Abraham's son, Isaac was born when Abraham was one hundred years old! Abraham was a humble man regarding himself "dust and ashes" in the presence of God (cf. Genesis 18:27) whose exceeding love for God was clearly manifest in His unhesitating obedience in carrying out God's commands even to the point of sacrificing His son, Isaac.

Not by human efforts alone but by the working of God's graces. *Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain (Psalm 127:1-2).* Human efforts expended in work not commissioned by God do not have much eternal value if they are done solely for the glory of man. The human person is limited in many ways. We have an inherent weakness due to the residual effect of original sin, compounded by our own personal sins. We are mostly weak in all aspects: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. We empathise with St. Paul when he said he did things he did not want to do, and did not do things he wanted to do (cf. Romans 7:15). However, God is not deterred by our weaknesses. What He looks at is the level of love and humility in our hearts. When these govern our hearts, His graces can do the rest.

Put in our best efforts, trust in Him and He will do the rest. Jesus says: *My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).* What God needs is a pliable instrument. He does not need a powerhouse. He is the powerhouse. We obstruct the Lord working fully in our lives by our dependence on and self-sufficiency in ourselves, charting out our lives based on our desires and opinion of what we should achieve in life, and relying solely on what we perceive as our own self-developed ability and capability. With a mindset led by personal feeling and pride, we feel less confident when we encounter a task God entrusted to us for the building of His Kingdom.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, Your Kingdom is built up not by human efforts driven by the will of man but by the working of grace through the Holy Spirit in Your children. I am only a poor earthen vessel but possess the power of God within me (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:6). Your power is made perfect in my weakness. You now need many labourers especially prayer warriors in Your vineyard to bring many souls to their eternal inheritance You have lovingly prepared for all Your children. You are looking to commission people to do the important work of building up Your Kingdom: people with open hearts with a readiness to obey Your commands and trust in You. Flood my soul with the light and love of Your Spirit so that I can rise up and respond to what You are asking of me. Give me the zeal of St. Paul and the love and obedience of Abraham so that I can help draw many souls to Your Sacred Heart. Mary, Refuge of Holy Love, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.