

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 12: 1-3)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Faithfulness will be our Joy

All things including adversities work together to secure my eternal inheritance because I love God and answer His call (cf. Romans 8:28). Many people are caught up with the pressures of modern life, and scarcely hear God's call to each and every one of His children to eternal life. In the parable of the great banquet, many of those invited made excuses not to come. *The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'* *Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'* *Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'* (Luke 14:18-20). But for those who love God and live according to His precepts, everything including adversities can be turned into their temporal and eternal good. Having his beloved son Joseph sold into slavery into Egypt was a great sorrow for the heart of Jacob, but later on, God used Joseph to provide them food in time of famine, preserving their whole family from sure death.

I have the ability to overcome all evil because the One who is in me is greater than the one who is in the world (cf. 1 John 4:4). Though human flesh is weak, making us do the things we do not want to do; and the devil prowls around us like a lion waiting to devour us, the Holy Spirit in us empowers us to respond to God's call and rise above our selfishness and pride. *For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God (Romans 8:13-14).* Therefore, I am not afraid even if an army encamps against me and war breaks out against me (cf. Psalm 27:3). In God, I am confident and secure.

Faithfulness means I can put all my trust in God who will never fail me (cf. Isaiah 49:15). Trust is the manifestation of faith. Throughout Scripture God demonstrates that those who trust in Him are never put to shame. Daniel and his young friends were thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to worship a gold statue of pagan King Nebuchadnezzar but emerged without a single hair burnt. Even though Abraham and his wife Sarah were advanced in age, God made good His promise to Abraham that his descendants will be as numerous as the sands on the shore. When Isaac was born, Abraham was 100 and Sarah 90. *Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me."* (Genesis 21:6). Only God can show perfect, unconditional love and has the absolute power to act in any circumstances and make good His promises.

In Christ I am more than a conqueror! (cf. Romans 8:37). Christ through His life, death and resurrection redeems me from the destructive power of sin and its wages of death, empowers me to live a life of grace freed from the previous and enslaving bondages of sin, and clothes me in His own righteousness so that I am fit to stand before God on the day of my judgement. In Christ I am fully justified. My hope is indestructible and my future bright because God has made me a co-heir with Christ and a member of His family (cf. Romans 8:17) and Christ lives forever to intercede for me while I am on my earthly pilgrimage (cf. Hebrews 7:25). *What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceive the things God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9).* God knows how to reward those who love Him.

Conversation with Christ

Precious Lord, You are the starter and perfecter of my faith, a precious gift from You. Without faith it is impossible to please You (cf. Hebrews 11:6). Thank You for Your gift of faith. Strengthen my faith by helping me accept with trust all the trials You sent into my life. Just as gold is purified by fire so too my faith will be strengthened by the furnace of trial and adversities. I am not alone. Your grace is enough to uphold me in the greatest of trials. Mary, Mother of Salvation, give me a good measure of Your steadfast faith in Your Son. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.