

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Letter of St. Paul to Timothy (2 Timothy 1:7-9a)

God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection ~ Trample that fear!

God did not give us a spirit of timidity. We live in difficult times, challenged on many fronts, all impacting on us directly and indirectly. The climate is changing and unusual in many places. The global financial system is fragile and tottering. We have been challenged on what we hold as moral truths of our faith, and some of us had been persecuted as well. Surely, there has not been more difficult times than ours, so challenged are we by the current prevailing culture of materialism, godlessness and the relentless pursuit of self gain and self gratification. It is precisely in times such as these that we called ever more strongly to live our faith. God gives us a timely reminder that He has not given us a spirit of fear but one of power, of love and of self-discipline.

Faced with the hungry lions. Scripture tells us that Daniel was put into the lions' den for his praying to God. The next morning found the king hurrying to the den and calling out anxiously to Daniel. Daniel answered, "My God sent His angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight." (Daniel 6:22a). Daniel's expectant faith in God and his innocence enabled him to surrender himself entirely to God's divine mercy and love, and God acted. Many times God requires a manifestation of faith before He acts. Our faith is not to be a dead one. Dead faith is no faith, it is useless. Faith drives away unholy fear.

The day when five pebbles, a sling and shepherd's staff went to war with a sword, a spear and a javelin. Scripture tells us that wars are not won chiefly on human power when God is brought into the picture. God Himself fights the war when there is faith and trust in Him. Mighty Goliath jeered and scorned at the puny David for his boldness in daring to fight the well trained giant warrior of the Philistines. It would seem that the hammer will crush the ant. But not so. For God was with David. David's faith in God was simple and true. God enabled him before to kill wild animals that attacked his lambs. He believed God will again enable him to kill Goliath, the pagan Philistine giant that was scaring the daylights out of the army of Israel. God acted on that belief.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). Many of us think at the back of our minds that God today is different from the God in biblical times that was so close to the Chosen People. Yet Scripture reminds us that Jesus is eternal and unchanging. His power and love remains unchanged. What changed is our faith. At the back of our minds, we put God into a distant category, a mighty being that is somewhere high up there. Yet St Paul reminds us that God is in us and moves among us! (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:16). Many of us forget that ours is a living God that feels the pains and joys of our daily living. Jesus is right here with us in our daily struggles. Through Isaiah, God says that even if a mother can forget her baby at her breast, He would not forget us! (cf. Isaiah 49:15). It is us who forget the presence of the living God who is always with us. In forgetting the presence of God in us and around us, we easily succumb to unholy fear.

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16). When we confess with our mouths and hearts that Jesus is the Son of the living God, the power of the Holy Spirit starts to move in us. Jesus chose the moment when Peter professed that He is the Son of the living God to bestow a great blessing on the simple Peter – to anoint him as head of Christ's Church. "Jesus, You are the Son of the living God and You are in me, with me and all around me" – let this be our mantra and repeat this truth to ourselves with our mouths and hearts till it becomes a living part of us. Being in the presence of God is the best place on earth! There is really no room for fear.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You are the Son of the living God who is in me, with me and all around me. In Your Presence I feel secure as a little helpless baby in the strong and secure arms of its mother. Please give me the grace to live in Your presence every day of my life. With You at my right hand, I know I can face fearlessly any ferocious lion looking to devour me or any intimidating giant waiting to do me in. For You, Valiant Warrior will fight my battles for me just as You did for Daniel and David. Mary, Protectress of the faith, teach me how to trust Jesus always. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.

Perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18a)