



Thirty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time

In the first reading (Prv. 31:10-13,19-20, 30-31) we find a worthy wife whose value is far beyond that of pearls. Her husband entrusts her with his heart. She always brings him good and not evil. She obtains wool and flax and works with her hands on the distaff and spindle. She reaches out to the poor and needy. Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting. The woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. She is to receive a reward and praise at the city gates for her labors.

Something to Think About:

1. Undoubtedly there will be some who find this description of a “worthy” wife to be demeaning because she is praised for all of the tasks she was able to accomplish while her husband merely sits at the city gate. Others may be surprised that in the patriarchal society of over 2000 years ago, we find a woman is being praised at all. A third way of looking at this (and the way I think we should consider this passage) is that the woman or a man who engages in ordinary tasks but performs them with extraordinary love and skill for her family and the poor, is indeed worthy of praise. Our reading skips a number of verses but in the whole section this woman makes cloth, secures provisions from afar, works late at night and early in the morning, she purchases a field and plants a vineyard, she is girted with strength, she works at the distaff and spindle, she cares for the poor and needy, she cloths her family for the winter and makes her own clothing. None of the things that she does is out of the ordinary for a woman during the time in which she lived but she does them all extremely well. For this she is praised. We (both women and men alike) too will be judged on the ordinary tasks we find ourselves involved with each day. The challenge is to do them with extraordinary love.

2. For all of her virtuous conduct this woman’s most outstanding characteristic is that she fears the Lord. This is the beginning of wisdom. No matter how virtuous we might be in all that we do, if we do not give the Lord the awe and reverence that He is due, we fail in the very reason we have been placed on this earth.

In the second reading (1 Thes 5:1-6) Paul writes to the Thessalonians that they have no need to question the time of the Lord’s coming because they know it will come like a thief in the night. Just when people are comfortable in peace and security, disaster will suddenly come upon them like labor pains do to a pregnant woman and there is no escape. However the Thessalonians are not in the dark but in the light for they are children of the light. Therefore they should not sleep like the rest do; rather they should stay alert and remain sober.

Something to Think About:

Paul continues his discussion about the end times. Having first warn the Thessalonians not to worry about their departed relatives missing the say Christ would come again, he now warns them to be alert for they do not know the time He will come. There is a lot of misinformation about the end times in our world which often involves a misinterpretation of apocalyptic literature. There is a lot that we do not know; however Christ and the apostles did teach us certain things about it that we should hold true and then disregard everything else as pure speculation. We do know these things:

1. Mt 26:64 “From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

2. Mk 13:24-27 “But in those days after the tribulation the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory and he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.”

3. Lk 21:25-28 “There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.”

4. 1Cor 15:51-53 “Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality.”

5. Phil3:20-21 “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself.”

6. Col 3:4 “When Christ our life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.”

7. 1 Th 2:19 “For what is our hope or joy or crown to boast in the presence of the Lord Jesus at his coming if not you yourselves?”

8. 1 Th 4:13-18 “We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Indeed, we tell you this on the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself with a

word of command, with the voice of an archangel and the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. They who are alive, who are left, will be caught up to the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.”

9. 2 Th 1:6-10 “For it is surely just on God’s part to repay with afflictions those who are afflicting you, and to grant rest along with us to you who are undergoing afflictions, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his mighty angels, in blazing fire, inflicting punishment on those who do not acknowledge God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal ruin, separated from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, when he comes to be glorified among his holy ones and to be marveled at on that day among all you have believed, for our testimony to you was believed.”

10. 1 Tim 6:13-15 “I charge you before God ... to keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ that the blessed and only ruler will make manifest at the proper time, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone had immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, who whom no human being has seen or can see .”

11. Titus 2:11-13 “For the grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of the great God and of our savior Jesus Christ.”

12. Heb 9:28 “... so also Christ, offered once to take away the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to take away sin but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.”

13. James 5:7-8 “Be patient, therefore, brothers until the coming of the Lord ... because the coming of the Lord is at hand.”

14. 1 Pt 1: 7, 4:13 “... so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold ... may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ... But rejoice to that extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may rejoice exultantly.”

15. 2 Pt 3:8-13 “But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. The Lord does not delay his promise, as some regard ‘delay’ but he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar and the elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be found out. Since everything is to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be, conducting yourselves in holiness and devotion, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be dissolved in flames and the elements melted by fire. But according to his promise we await a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”

16. 1 John 3:2 “Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

17. Jude 1:14-15 “...Behold the Lord has come with his countless holy ones to execute judgment on all and to convict everyone for all the godless deeds that they committed and all the harsh words godless sinners had uttered against him.”

18. Rev 1:7 “Behold he is coming amid the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. All peoples of the earth will lament him.”

In the gospel (Mt 25:14-30) Jesus tells his disciples a parable about a man who goes on a journey and entrusts his servants with his possessions. To one he gave five talents, another two and a third one, each according to his ability. Then he went away. Immediately the one with five talents traded with them and made another five. Likewise, the one with two made another two. The one with only one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried the talent. After a long time, the master returned and settled accounts with them. One brought him ten talents and another four talents. To them he said, “Well done my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great

responsibilities.” The servant who had received one talent came forward returning it to the master and noted that he knew the master was a demanding person and so he had buried his talent in the ground. The master replied, “You wicked, lazy servant.” Knowing the master’s disposition should, he not have put his money in the bank so that he could have received interest upon his return? He said to take the one talent from him and give it to the one with ten. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. He then had the useless servant thrown into the darkness where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

Something to Think About:

1. Last week the parable of the ten bridesmaids talked about the need to be alert and ready when the Lord comes. This week the parable is about what we do in the meantime. The man going on a journey, or the Lord, entrusts each man with a sum of money according to his ability. No one received more or less than that which he could handle. God knows each of us from the time before we were even conceived in our mother’s womb. He knows us through and through. He does not overwhelm us with things that are beyond our capabilities. There is no excuse for failing to do His will. If we fail, it is because we hate our master, or we are lazy, or make a dumb decision, or lack self-confidence or because we have procrastinated; it is not because we are incapable. God expects that what He has given us will be used wisely and will produce fruit. How would God evaluate how I am getting along? There is still time.

2. Eventually we will need to give an accounting for all the good things that God has done for us. There will be no avoiding it – it is our destiny. For most of us God is not asking us to sell all that we have and go work in some mission in a far of land; rather He is asking us to do what we are currently called to do in our life’s vocation but in a more loving way. He wants us to use our time, talent and treasures to serve Him. How would God judge how I am doing? Is He asking me to do more? If so, what? Am I confident that I will be blessed if I do more?

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