

■ No. 125 Sharing of the Word Commentary and Meditation

● First Reading: Sirach 15:15-20

God created human beings as creatures endowed with free will. Although He shows the way, He does not force us; our choices carry responsibility. Human sin is the result of choice. The fundamental way of life in accordance with God's wisdom is to choose from the heart the "commandments" (the Ten Commandments, love of neighbor, loving one another) and to carry them out willingly.

Before a person makes a choice, there are already placed before them the "fire and death" of destruction, judgment, and separation from God, and the "water and life" that nourish, foster growth, and bestow grace. God shows good and evil but does not compel; "it is you who must decide." Every choice made before God entails responsibility, and one "takes what one desires."

In choosing how to live, one chooses either "life," living a fulfilled and abundant existence, or "death," losing sight of life itself. As entrusted to each person (cf. Deuteronomy 30:15), "the path one chooses is given to him," and each person lives the road of life or death that he or she has chosen.

The Lord's wisdom is abundant. He is not a mere bystander but a mighty One who acts with justice and corrects through judgment. The Lord already knows human motives and weaknesses. He watches over those who fear Him; He overlooks neither good nor evil, and His judgment is just. He has never commanded, "You need not believe in God," or "You may rebel," nor has He ever condoned or silently approved of sin.

A Word from the Author:

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways" (Isaiah 55:8). When people make choices, intuition and desire easily incline toward self-centeredness (the six desires). I felt it important to pause and consider whether "the Lord's will may be a different path."

● Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

This passage teaches that the Gospel of the Cross may appear foolish to the wise of this world, yet for believers it becomes a guidepost.

Paul, to whom God entrusted the proclamation of the Gospel, and his fellow workers (apostles and missionaries) accepted the Gospel of the Cross, lived under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and became mature in faith. They proclaimed the "wisdom" of God's saving plan His plan of the Cross and Resurrection.

This wisdom is not the "wisdom of this world," which seeks self-fulfillment or success, nor the wisdom of the "rulers who are perishing" and stand opposed to God (sin, death, evil). Rather, it is the mystery of truth revealed only by God once hidden within His plan of the Cross and Resurrection. God's plan of salvation, destined to grant us glory and entrance into His new Kingdom as His children, was established before the creation of the world, before time began. The rulers of this age did not understand this wisdom; otherwise, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

As it is written (cf. Isaiah 64:4; 65:17), "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard" beyond the limits of human senses and experience God had already prepared for those who love Him. This grace, beyond human imagination, is revealed through the Holy Spirit, who enables us even to search the deep things of God and to know His will and truth.

A Word from the Author:

I never imagined that such things were written in the Bible.

● Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:17-37

The Beatitudes describe the inner attitude for living; "salt and light" show how that life is manifested in the world. Here, Jesus presents concrete ways of living.

The entire Old Testament is referred to as "the Law and the Prophets," and Jesus brings its meaning to fulfillment. "Until

all is accomplished” refers to the realization of salvation.

What may seem “small commandments,” such as avoiding anger or practicing sincerity, are not insignificant. Those who treat them lightly are called “least” in the Kingdom of Heaven. To show others one’s way of life is to “teach.” Those who seek to live God’s will are called “great.”

Unless one’s righteousness surpasses that of those who emphasize outward observance and regulations, and unless one practices love and communion with the Lord, one “will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Harboring hostility or contempt, and speaking words that cut one off from God calling another “fool” lead to judgment. Words that destroy the heart through sin are likened to the “Sanhedrin” and the “hell of fire.”

If, even in the midst of worship, one remembers a broken relationship, reconciliation takes priority. One should “be reconciled quickly” before it is too late; complete settlement is expressed as “the last quadrans.”

Desire itself is called “adultery,” and looking at another as an object of desire is a “lustful intent.” To commit adultery “in the heart” means that the sin begins within. Radical separation from sin is described as “losing a part of the body.” Sexual immorality or unlawful unions are called “illicit marriages.”

Marriage is a covenant made before God. A man who divorces his wife for his own convenience becomes one who “causes her to commit adultery,” since, in that time, a woman often had no choice but to remarry. The responsibility of the man who creates such a situation is grave. To dissolve a legitimate marriage according to human will, and then to marry a divorced woman unjustly sent away, makes one “an adulterer.”

Regarding oaths, sincere speech is essential. Using God’s name to support insincere words is a “false oath.” Some avoided invoking God’s name directly by swearing by heaven or earth. But the truthful person walks simply by saying “Yes” or “No.” Distrust and concealment come “from the evil one.”

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