

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time C/2019

The readings of this Sunday talk about human happiness. They show that, though human beings want to be happy, true happiness can only be found in God. They invite us to found our happiness on God.

The first reading describes the situation of the one who trusts in human beings as building on fragile ground. Then, it describes the situation of the one who trusts in God as a real happy man. Finally, the text compares the one trusting in God to a tree planted close to a stream of water that irrigates it continually.

What is behind this text is the idea that the pursuit of happiness is a major concern for human beings. There is also the idea that true happiness is found in God. The last idea is related to the truth that human happiness is fragile, while true happiness is only in God.

This text helps us understand what is at stake in today's Gospel as Jesus speaks of the beatitudes. First of all, the Gospel says that as Jesus came down with his apostles, he addressed the crowd of his disciples and the people from all over the surrounding regions gathered for the circumstance.

Then, it refers to Jesus' teaching as invoking two ways open to each person. Finally, the Gospel shows the first way as leading to happiness and the second as leading to curse.

What do we learn from these readings? Today I want to talk about the pursuit of happiness and the joy of blessedness. What do I mean by that? Let me explain. In fact, many people in our world want to be happy. We ourselves want to be happy. For that reason, we undertake many things in our life that are susceptible of helping us to be happy.

However, human experience has shown that sometimes, though in what we have done we had a lot of fun, it has not made us totally happy. At times, we realize that even when we have achieved great things in life and had moments of joy and pleasure; it has not made us completely happy. Even when people have everything in this world like money, cars, material possessions, fame, success, power, they still have feelings of frustration, emptiness, disappointment, etc.

Such an observation pushes us to distinguish simple happiness from eternal happiness. It also pushes us to recognize that there is a spiritual component that many people overlook in their search for happiness. It is that spiritual component that we find in the Beatitudes.

In fact, human happiness depends on chances, luck and circumstances. Chances and circumstances of life can change. A change in fortune, a collapse in health, a failure in the attainment of a dream, can take away the smallest happiness someone can have.

Such a vision shows us that human happiness is fragile while eternal happiness is unbreakable because it has God as the foundation. Eternal happiness or Beatitudes can be achieved even in pain, suffering, hunger, and persecution. This is totally different from the standards by which our world judges what it means to be happy.

Instead of hanging on to mere human happiness, we have to find our happiness in God. If we do so, we will discover that it is not only a question of being happy now, but that of

being happy in a way that the whole of our life is meaningful. Then, we will come to understand why, though some people have everything they need in this life, they are unhappy; while others' lacking almost everything, are happy.

Those people have found the secret of true happiness, which is God. The Beatitudes are an invitation to a way of living that leads to true happiness. They are an offer to a deep relationship with God. Those who live according to the teaching they contain belong to the Kingdom of God.

Those who are poor, hungry, weeping, persecuted..., hold out the foretaste of heaven into their hands as the life of God dwells in them. They are truly disciples of Jesus. They live not according to their own criteria and ways of life, but rather those of Jesus. They want to imitate Jesus and follow his lead.

In this context, the disciples are blessed because they have discovered that true happiness does not depend on material possession, having plenty or being without problems. They are blessed, because, in spite of evident situations of poverty, hunger, suffering, hatred and rejection, they still trust God. They know that nothing of the adverse situations will last forever, because God's plan of salvation goes beyond this world.

The other people are cursed, because they have not discovered the importance of God and the change he wants them to operate in their lives. Living in the moment, they think that their present situation of fortune, plenty, laughs and fame, is all that counts to make them happy. And yet, God plays a big part in our search for happiness.

All this shows us that the beatitudes have a double character of appeal and challenge. They appeal to our humanity so that we change the situation of poverty, hunger and suffering in the world, as an anticipation of God's kingdom on earth. At the same time, they challenge us so that when we are confronted with our own situation of poverty, suffering, rejection and insult, we are convinced that we are at the good side of history. Jesus will not leave us alone or without reward.

The last thing to say is that human experience has taught us that human desires are never fully satisfied. In such a context, a blessed person is one who trusts and hopes for more to come. Happiness that is present is beautiful and pleasant, but always raises the question of tomorrow. "How will my tomorrow be?" This should be the question each has to ask himself.

Let us pray that in our search for happiness, we do not forget God who is the source of true and everlasting happiness. May God help us to use our present situation in the world as preparation for our eternal life! God bless you all.

Jeremiah 6: 1-2a, 3-8; 1 Corinthians 15: 12, 16-20; Luke 6: 17, 20-26



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