

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time C/2022

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 really 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 the point of 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 of life open to each person: the way leading to happiness and the way leading to curse.

What do we learn from these readings? Today I want to talk about the secret of true happiness. What do I mean by that? Let me explain by the way of example. In the study of geography, there is a lesson on the lines that divide the continents from one another called meridian. The meridian divides the East from the West as the Equator divides the North from the South. Those lines are unchangeable in the sense that a land that is in one meridian cannot pass to the other meridian, East will never become West and North will never be South, etc.

In the Gospel of today, there is a kind of line that Jesus sets that divides the fortunate from the unfortunate, the blessed from the cursed. Unlike the geographic meridian, the line that Jesus puts is movable and changeable. It is possible to pass from one side to another. That line defines the Kingdom of God from the Kingdom of the world.

In order words, there are two ways of understanding life: either for the kingdom of God or for one's consolation because life can be exclusively lived for this earthly life, or for eternal life. Though the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world stand often in opposition to each other, it is possible for someone, through conversion of heart, to pass in the kingdom of heaven.

The criteria that the world sets in order to be fortunate are in opposition to those of the Kingdom of God. For instance, Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor...; blessed are those who are hungry...; blessed are those weeping...; blessed are those who are hated.... Poverty, hunger, mourning or hatred, aren't things that we consider as making someone happy. And yet, Jesus says that those who have them are blessed, why? Those people are blessed because they have found the secret of true happiness, which is God. Those who are poor, hungry, weeping, hated..., hold out the foretaste of heaven into their hands as the life of God dwells in them. They live not according to their own criteria and ways of life, but rather those of Jesus.

In that context, the disciples are blessed because they have understood that true happiness does not necessarily depend on material possession, neither on having plenty or being without problems. They are happy, because, in spite of evident situations of poverty, hunger, suffering, hatred and rejection, they still trust God. They know that nothing in this world will last forever, but God will because eternal life belongs to him.

Even if it is true that poverty, hunger, weeping, or suffering are not in themselves an ideal situation. These things are, indeed, diminishing conditions that should be changed. However, when we live these conditions with God, they can pave the way to true happiness. God can always change poverty into riches, hunger into satisfaction, weeping into laughing, and suffering into joy. Moreover, when in spite of our poverty, hunger, weeping and suffering, we do not reject God, but we engage him in our problems, we put ourselves in the way that leads to his kingdom.

The other people are cursed, because they have not discovered the secret of true happiness, which is God. What God wants of them is just that they change the ways they live and believe in him. 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, what counts most is God and his kingdom. As long as they have not found God, they will never be happy, whatever might be their fortune or fame. Their pretended happiness will be always fragile, because it is built on shaky ground.

However, Jesus does not simply canonize all the poor, the hungry, those who weep, and the persecuted, just as he does not simply demonize all the rich, the satiated, those who laugh and are praised. The problem is about knowing what we put our trust in, on what sort of foundation we are building the house of our life, whether it is on that which will pass away, or on that which will not pass away.

That is why the Gospel of today is challenging us while at the same time it is inviting us to an examination of conscience about where we stand in our search of happiness. It also appeals 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. In truth, when we are confronted with our own situation of poverty, suffering, rejection and insult, we have to be convinced that we are at the good side of history. Jesus will not leave us alone or without reward.

We pray that the Lord comes to our rescue so that in our search of happiness, we do not forget his Father 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 17: 5-8; 1 Corinthians 15: 12, 16-20; Luke 6: 17, 20-26



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Contact: www.mbala.org
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