

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time A2023

I want to start this homily with an observation. There are a lot of things we do in this world to make our life enjoyable and easy. There are a lot of activities in which we are involved with the aim of enhancing the quality of our life and its worth. We hunt, we fish, we camp, we travel, etc. Those things are so important to us that if one was taken away from us, we would suffer and the balance of our life would be compromised.

Those things, however, are less valuable compared to the kingdom of God. Whatever might be the value we give to those activities, they cannot equal the kingdom of God. In other words, we cannot put the kingdom of heaven at same level with the things of this world. The Kingdom of God is the supreme good that gives meaning and value to everything else we do in this world.

Why? Because it is God himself who gives life and meaning to all our desires, wants and needs. Because God is the source of everything we are and have, his kingdom is the supreme value that any human being should be preoccupied for. And the things of this world should be submitted to it. For that reason, we have to give priority to the kingdom of God above everything else.

That is what our Lord wants to tell us with the parables of the hidden treasure and that of the pearl. The man who found the treasure buried in the field did not hesitate to sell everything he possessed to acquire it. The merchant who found the pearl of great price did not hesitate to sell everything he had to buy it. That is how we have to deal with the things of the world: to hold them as less valuable with regard to the kingdom of God.

What it means, in truth, is that the things we possess and enjoy in this world should not become an obstacle in our relationship with God. They should not prevent us to arise to God and to search for the eternal values of God's kingdom. Because nothing in this life is worth the eternal damnation of our souls, we must be willing to sacrifice whatever is necessary to gain salvation and eternal life.

To consider the things of this world as less valuable, in comparison to the kingdom of God, does not mean that we have to despise them. On the contrary, we have to see them as means that God has put at our disposal in order to make our life easy and to help us by using them to ascend to him.

As human experience has shown, sometimes the things of the world can become an impediment in our relationship with God; they can stand between us and God. [Example of people who opened the store and do not come to Mass anymore]. Therefore, there is urgency that we make the right decision right away in favor of God. It does not serve our interest if we delay the decision we have to make. In fact, the man who found the treasure buried or the merchant, who found the pearls, did not delay their decision to act and acquire those valuable objects they needed.

In the same way, the kingdom of God compels us to act right now, to change our lives and to leave the sins behind us. This is very important for us and requires a prompt decision on our part. The drama of our generation is to think that we still have the time to decide. Or as some say, "I know all that; I'll do it, but now is not yet the time".

This let me wonder: “When will we get serious about making decision? It is true that life is full of opportunities. But who knows how tomorrow will be? Who knows if the opportunity we miss today will come again our way? Who knows whether this is the last chance of our life?”

The mentality of complacency cannot help us at all, because the time will come where it will be impossible to start again or go back. The wheel of history goes forward and not backward. The time of reckoning will come. When that moment will come, it will be late. That moment will be a time of judgment and separation of the just from the wicked. That is the warning we have in the last parable of the net.

The net is the symbol of the church that is a mixture bad and good people like fish in the net. However, we have to remember that God’s deepest intention is not that we stay as we are, but rather that we change, renounce our sins and conform our life to his will. We really need God’s wisdom to make a right decision now. Like the Young Solomon we have to opt for what can help us in the future and not for the immediate satisfaction.

We have to live every moment our life in view of our precious goal, which is the Kingdom of God. Most of the time, we are chasing false treasures such as money, status or pleasure. Unfortunately, those are passing things. When someone dies, he takes with him nothing of what he has worked so hard. That has to give us an idea about the value of the Kingdom of God. It is the ultimate value we will be dealing with at the end of our life. When everything of the earth will stop, we will face God and his judgement. Therefore, the really valuable pearl of sharing in God’s life is worth some sacrifice.

Let us remember that Heaven is within the reach of all those who try to do the will of God, following the ordinary circumstances of their life and by enjoying this world’s joys and pleasures, but within the framework of God’s Commandments. It belongs to each one of us to use the time God has given to us to go in search of the pearl of great price and to help others in their search. We need God’s wisdom to search and discern where the Lord is calling us so that we may know what path to take.

May God help each one of us to understand that his kingdom is a great treasure for which we have to sacrifice everything! May he fill us with his Holy Spirit so that we may able to choose his kingdom as our ultimate value! God bless you all!

1 Kings 3: 5, 7-12; Romans 8: 28-30; Matthew 13: 44-52



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Contact: www.mbala.org
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