

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time C2025

Many people ask questions like these: What will happen to us when we die? Why the trend of this life we enjoy so much shall stop one day? Why are we doing all these activities in which we are involved right now if one day we sink in complete unconsciousness without any life within us? After all, is there any life after death?

St Paul responds to these questions with just one sentence, if Christ has not risen from the dead, our faith has no foundation at all. Not only we are the most miserable of all the peoples on earth, but also all those who have died in Christ are lost forever. And yet, Christ is risen from the dead as the first fruit of those who have fallen asleep. Like a first fruit that gives the taste and the quality of all the fruits on a tree, Jesus' resurrection is the measure of what we hope for in the life after death.

As Christ died and rose from the dead, those who die with him will share in his resurrection. Therefore, what we do right now in this world is a preparation for and in anticipation of the life of the world to come. Not that the present world and its reality lose their importance. Rather, they lead us to the fullness of time where the risen Christ has preceded us.

Then, it becomes clear why Jeremiah claims loudly that "Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings" and "seeks his strength in flesh". In the same way, "Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose hope in the Lord". So, there are two things before each person: the good and the bad, the curse and the blessing. Following the good means putting ourselves in a way that leads to blessing, while taking the opposite way leads to malediction.

Whoever puts his trust in human beings alone, and forgets God, is ruining his life, because there is nothing to expect from a mortal being. Whoever trusts in the Lord, and bases his life on him, is blessed because God is the source of life everlasting.

That is the reason why the one who trusts in the Lord is like a tree planted near a river that stretches out its roots to the stream. Such a tree does not fear summer, neither the heat nor the drought; its leaves remain green all year long. It bears much fruit, because the stream continually irrigates and nourishes it.

What Jeremiah is telling us in this reading is not that we have to distrust people in our relationships, nor is he teaching us passivity under the pretext that God will resolve all our problems. On the contrary, the prophet intends to make us aware of the fact that given the fragility and the instability of human condition, it is better to found the meaning of our lives on a solid foundation, that is, God. Whoever is with God is never lost, no matter what happens to him in his life.

To be able to choose God and to put him above anything else is what makes the apostles to be called blessed in today's Gospel. Jesus calls them blessed because they have understood that happiness does not depend necessarily on material possession, neither on having plenty nor being without problem.

But rather, in the way they handle the situations of poverty, famine, suffering and rejection, knowing well that they will not last forever, because God's plan of salvation goes beyond this world.

It is also true that poverty, hunger, mourning or suffering, are not in themselves an ideal situations. They will ever be diminishing conditions that should be changed. However, these diminishing conditions, when lived with God, can pave the way to happiness in the sense that they will not last eternally. 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 lives and our problems, we put ourselves in the way that leads to his kingdom.

If the others are called cursed, it is because they have not understood the importance of God for their lives, in the present, and the place of eternal salvation, in the future. They have made wrong choices. As God does not count at all for them, they reason as though their present riches, joy and fortune are determining conditions for everlasting happiness.

In other words, it is not because they have plenty, are satisfied or joyful, that they are cursed. It is because their situations prevent them to search for God and to give him a place he deserves in their lives. That is why the beatitudes have a double character of appeal and challenge.

The beatitudes appeal to our deepest 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 as they invite us to imitate our Lord Jesus who though was poor, suffering and rejected, was happy and promised us abundant life if we follow in his footsteps.

Let me conclude by saying that Happiness implies that certain of our desires are met. However, given that a human being's desires are never fully satisfied, a happy person trusts and hopes for more to come. Happiness that is present is beautiful, but always prompts the question: What about tomorrow? A happiness that has eternal life as its ultimate goal is "true Happiness". May we always yearn for such a happiness, which cannot be achieved outside God and which points to our eternal salvation! Amen

Jeremiah 17: 5-8; 1 Corinthians 15: 12, 16-20; Luke 6: 17, 20-26



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