

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Jun 4th 2014

Two parallel messages in today's first reading from Acts 20 and the Gospel from John jumped out at me. The first is verse 32 as Paul addresses the church of Ephesus: "And now I commend you to God, and to that gracious word of his that can build you up."

The second is verse 17 in John 17, as Jesus prays to his Father as he is about to begin his passion and death: "Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth."

In both situations believers are being directed to God's word as their flesh-and-blood liaisons (Paul in the first reading, Jesus in the second) are getting ready to depart.

Of course, this is a very basic message of our Christian faith, that the word of God is valuable, edifying, important, and, in fact, critical to our faith. Still, when I read and reread those two lines they both spoke volumes to me.

Paul called God's word gracious. And so it is. The words from God through God's emissaries are full of grace if we are open to them. And they can build us up if we allow them to. In order to receive those full graces, we need to reflect, to chew on, to digest the words we read and hear through scripture and allow them to touch us, move us, change us.

And Jesus asked his Father to consecrate us "in truth," adding, "your word is truth." Theological debates aside as to what certain scripture passages mean or don't mean, we can all find comfort in Jesus saying that God's word is truth for us.

Again, if we take the time to listen, reflect and respond, we know the truth when we hear it. We know whether certain scripture passages we are reading are meant just for us because the Holy Spirit brings that insight into our hearts and minds. The big T Truth becomes our truth when we recognize ourselves in a reading, a verse, a Bible story. And we know – we just know – that God is speaking to us—to me, to you—and we are changed.

As Paul said, we are built up – we are made better, more complete. How wonderful that God allows a vehicle as simple as words to reach through time and space to our hearts and minds.

Cindy Murphy McMahon - Creighton University Student