

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Jul 15th 2014

Today's readings seem harsh, and in a sense they are. In the first reading the town is in danger from formidable foes and the people are trembling like trees in the wind. The threat and the danger are real. They are concerned. But the Lord tells them not to fear, to stop trembling, to show no fear and to have faith. If they show no fear and stand fast, the armies' mischief will come to nothing. The Lord says if their faith is firm, they will stand firm and their town will survive, but if they lose their faith they will be crushed; it will be like they never existed. If they are God's city and put their trust in God, they will survive and persevere.

The city imagery continues in the Psalm. The city that praises God and put its trust in God will be saved. The leaders of the city will tremble before the Lord, but their faith and perseverance will put them in good stead to see God's own city after this life. Like the town in the first reading, their faith will save them.

And in the Gospel, Jesus talks of cities again. The cities where he has been preaching and performing miracles are not accepting him and not repenting, changing their ways and following him. He's right there. He's performing miracles. They can see him. Why won't they accept him? Why won't they follow him? He says other towns would love to have him and would repent and follow him immediately. He says if he had been at Sodom, they would have recognized him and repented and would still be here today. But here he is, doing miracles, and this town won't recognize. He says it will be better for Sodom at the Judgment day. They perished, but they didn't have the opportunity for redemption. This town has every opportunity and won't take advantage. It's worse for them.

And what is our lesson here? What city should we be like? The city that has faith and trusts in God will persevere. The city that sees Jesus and refuses to repent will fail. We should trust in God and be saved. Jesus is not physically in our midst performing miracles, but we can still learn from his teachings and we can still recognize him and repent. We can be like the city that is saved. We can see the city of God. We can accept Jesus, and if we do we can be saved.

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