

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jul 15th 2018

Judging Others? Or Ourselves?

We are so blessed to have the Bible and our inspired pastors, priests and church leaders to teach us and lead us. So is that enough? Is it OK to leave the God “stuff” to others, to those “called”? Today’s scripture readings provide unmistakably clear answers to that question.

Amos was not a priest, but simply a farmer, an ordinary man living in a small town a few miles south of Bethlehem. That sounds a lot like me – a simple ordinary man - and yet God called Amos to deliver a very important message to the people of Israel. Perhaps the most amazing part of Amos’ story is not his message, but that he simply listened and obeyed. He didn’t come up with a list of excuses or reasons why he was not the right man for the job. He simply responded to God’s call with courage and faith.

The responsorial Psalm points to the results that Amos (and each of us) can expect. If we listen to God and are wise enough to trust Him, then God will be able to use us in His holy plan.

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul reminds us that God chose us before the foundation of the world. He destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ. Does that sound like he expected us to sit back and let others do the work of pointing our brothers and sisters to Jesus? But I am not trained, I am just an ordinary man, how could I possibly be called by the God of the universe to do anything so important? Paul forcefully responds to that fear by reminding us that God has lavished His grace upon us and that God has provided us with all “wisdom and insight” into the mystery of His will in accordance with His favor. We are a part of His amazing plan. “In Him, we were also chosen, destined....” That fact is just so breathtaking - that God all along had me as a part of His plan. As with Amos, God provides us with all that is needed to follow His will for our life, to truly make a difference; to make a profound difference for eternity.

But the message in today’s lesson does not end with the letter to the Ephesians. In Mark’s gospel, Jesus tells us that we need not worry that we may not have what it takes to complete God’s plan for our life. We simply need to trust that He is with us and that He will provide everything we need. The disciples, all simple ordinary men, grasped this truth and were able to share the good news of Jesus with power and effectiveness well beyond anything they could ever have imagined. God used each of them just like He has planned to use each of us.

Dear Heavenly Father, help me to stay focused upon the fact that you are always with me and that I have always been a part of your Holy plan - from the beginning of time. While that fact is overwhelming, I know that it is true and that You alone will provide all that is needed to overcome my inadequacies and failures. Thank you Jesus, please take my heart and empower me with the courage to use my life however You wish.

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