

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Sep 12th 2018

The beginning of the Sermon on the Plain that we hear today is often talked about as extolling a preferential option for the poor, hungry, weeping and hated. I hear that message and accept it. But in my prayer and contemplation I felt like there was something else trying to emerge. I spent a lot of time reading and rereading looking for the clue or words that maybe I had skimmed before and not taken in. All of this wrestling led to the following thoughts.

We all have days where we are poor, and days when we are rich. We have days when we are hungry and times when we are satisfied. Times of weeping and times of laughing and times when we are admired and those when we are hated. I feel an invitation in these verses from Jesus to not hold on too tightly to any of them. Could there be a message, a layer, in this scripture about detachment?

I hear, don't get too attached when things are going well and everyone loves you. Tomorrow, could be the opposite. And yes, today may be filled with suffering and pain but tomorrow or next week things can change. Our time on earth is temporary. These joys and sorrows are temporary. What is eternal is life with Christ which is filled with love and joy and is not something we have to wait for – heaven is now if we live in Christ.

But what do we do with the reality that in our world today, there are the incredibly, chronically poor and suffering? It is a tension of our time. My thought would be to live these times with compassion and love and work for change with and through Christ. But hold all things lightly or loosely. “The world in its present form is passing away,” minute by minute, day by day.

I hear an invitation to, as we walk through our day, notice what we hold tightly to - our reputation, wealth, suffering? How are we being invited to loosen our hold and let Christ in?

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