

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Feb 7th 2024

God has taken a huge gamble

Where does evil come from? In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches us that our heart is the source of all human behaviour, whether good or bad. Jesus focuses on the human heart, the abode of all good and bad choices. Outward observance of rituals and traditions does not make us holy, nor do they help us to please God.

Jewish traditions insisted on ritual purity to protect God's chosen people from everything associated with pagans – non-Jews or unclean animals. People observed them out of fear of God's punishment.

Do our religious observances, prayers, or even attending Mass arise out of fear of God's punishment? If we go to Mass to fulfil the days of obligation, how are we different from the religious scholars of Jesus' time?

The greatest gift of God to human beings is the gift of "freedom." Humans alone have the ability to choose. The Book of Genesis presented the problem of freedom within the poetic context of the forbidden fruit. Care should be taken not to envision a literal tree or even a literal apple. The author presents the tree as a symbol of the fact that we are called to choose real good, not what looks like good.

God took a huge gamble when he granted the humans with the gift of freedom. He ran the risk that we would abuse our freedom, yet God granted us freedom because he wants us to return his love voluntarily.

The fact that we are at this Mass shows that we have freely chosen to show our love for God through the celebration of Mass. The same is the case with all evil behaviours - it is up to us to choose from the heart whether we want to be good or bad.

bibleclaret