

TRINITY 7
1Kgs 3:3-5; 7-12
Rom 8:28-30
Mt 13:44-52

Choices, Choice, Choices! Making choices is part of life but have you ever wondered why so many choices we would like to make are illegal, immoral or they make us fat? Solomon made the right choice when he chose the gift of wisdom, which Job considered to be more valuable than rubies (Job 28:28), rather than riches, so that he could rule God's people with justice.

Jesus describes the kingdom of God is like those who search for treasure and precious stones. Today's gospel reading tells us that the kingdom can be found as an expected or unexpected surprise. One man stumbles across treasure buried in a field that he was contemplating buying while another is deliberately looking for precious stones. When both men find their treasure, they sell everything they have in order to purchase it. They don't get something for nothing, they are willing to sacrifice everything they have in order to attain what they were looking for.

What Jesus is describing is that singleness of mind, or purity of heart which he urges his listeners to have in order to discover the kingdom of God. Disciples have no chance of growth or embracing change until we have worked out what it is we really desire. Where are our treasures? We need to know because that is where our heart is. Christianity is not simply found in our brain. What is in our brain needs to connect with the desires of our heart if we are to achieve anything at all. If actions speak louder than words, then how we live our lives defines what our priorities in life are. Similarly our spiritual lives must have the desire to be open to God's will and with the infusion of the Holy Spirit, be obedient to it yoked with Jesus as we pursue our journey in a world alongside fellow travellers as well as those who wish to destroy the kingdom of God.

Discipleship is a journey and any journey demands flexibility and adaptability. As Newman reminds us, "In this world, to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often" (Development of Doctrine, 1974 p 100). It requires a willingness to press through what is known known into the unknown, letting go of what needs to be jettisoned in order to embrace the light of new horizons.

In the embrace of change, Jesus said that we need to retain old treasures as well as discovering what is new. We have not to be satisfied with survival, which means doing whatever it takes in order to placate the enemies of the gospel in order to survive. Neither does it mean working for a revival of the Church by recreating some imagined golden age from the past. Jesus advocates renewal built on the tried and tested and represented in a new way. Not all change is good, and the way to tell the difference is to know what our ultimate destination is and see if the proposed change is in harmony with that.

It was St Thomas who said to Jesus, "If we don't know where you are going, how can we know the way?" "I am the Way," replied Jesus "and no-one comes to the Father except through me."

In challenging the religious leadership of his day, Jesus brought the treasures of God's Law and re-presented its true meaning to the Church that he gathered. The one thing that will paralyse us in our present difficulties is fear. It is fear that paralyzes us from holding to God's truth yet moving forward to re-present that truth in a world that has disengaged from God. If we are afraid, it means we do not love God, because 'perfect love casts out fear' (1 Jn 4:18).

In the Garden of Eden, Adam hid from God. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus submitted his will to that of his Father. In Eden, fear ruled. In Gethsemane, self-giving suffering love conquered. Our choice is paralysis or suffering love and as CS Lewis reminds us, "Apart from heaven, the only other place you are safe from the dangers of love is hell" (The Four Loves, Geoffrey Bles 1960 p 138f).

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