

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading 1 Acts 14:21-27

After Paul and Barnabas had proclaimed the good news to that city and made a considerable number of disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch.

They strengthened the spirits of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere in the faith, saying, "It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."

They appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had put their faith. Then they traveled through Pisidia and reached Pamphylia. After proclaiming the word at Perga they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now accomplished.

And when they arrived, they called the church together and reported what God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Reading 2 Rev 21:1-5a

Then I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them as their God.

Reflection Questions

- Reading the passages slowly and reflectively, what word, phrase or idea strikes you in the readings? (circle or underline them)
- What do you think God is trying to say to you personally through these words?
- Paul and Barnabas traveled great distances, endured resistance and persecution and spent years away from their 'home base' of Antioch. On finishing their 'journey' they returned back through the various towns - even those that persecuted them! What does this teach you about Paul and Barnabas? What would 'their' missionary journey look like in 'your' world, office or workplace?
- Paul and Barnabas broke centuries old prejudices of considering God only loved 'the Jews'. His 'chosen'. Going to the Gentiles was an enormous change. To put this into context, if a Jew married a Gentile in Jesus' time the Jewish family would conduct a public funeral to say to everyone that you were now 'dead' to the family. Gentiles were considered 'intrinsically unclean'. Strict Jews believed they were 'defiled' by being with Gentiles. Which group of people today are considered 'outcasts', 'sinners', beyond God's love? Could you be a missionary to them? What might need to change in you? In the church?

He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away.”

The One who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.”

Gospel Jn 13:31-33a, 34-35

When Judas had left them, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and God will glorify him at once.

My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.

This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- The Book of Revelation gives us the final seventh vision. Although Jerusalem had been destroyed and Christians were being severely persecuted a vision is seen of what will come true. Can you look at the Church today - in its current struggles - and see the bride (church) adorned for her husband (Christ) and God’s presence ever-dwelling in the Church in the Eucharist and the Word?
- In John’s gospel the moment of Jesus dying on the cross is not simply a place of suffering. The word Glory is used 5 times in today’s gospel. It is Jesus being ‘lifted up’ like a winning coach on the shoulders of the winning sports team. It is a moment of victory. Glorious! When you look at the cross, do you see only suffering? Can you see why it is also ‘glorious’?
- Jesus gives a commandment to his disciples which is ‘new’. While the Old Testament encouraged Jews to ‘love’ their neighbour, it was interpreted within the boundaries of your ‘inner circle’ of family. Jesus tells his disciples the love his followers are to show is to be qualitatively different. A self sacrificing love to all like his own love on the cross. A love to ‘outsiders’ not simply ‘insiders’. Would people see in your lifestyle and ‘love’ style something different? Can you identify a lived action where you lived and showed Christ recently?
- What is one action that you will do to ‘livetheword’ this week?