

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Reading 1 Gn 18:20-32

In those days, the LORD said: "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave, that I must go down and see whether or not their actions fully correspond to the cry against them that comes to me. I mean to find out."

While Abraham's visitors walked on farther toward Sodom, the LORD remained standing before Abraham. Then Abraham drew nearer and said: "Will you sweep away the innocent with the guilty? Suppose there were fifty innocent people in the city; would you wipe out the place, rather than spare it for the sake of the fifty innocent people within it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to make the innocent die with the guilty so that the innocent and the guilty would be treated alike! Should not the judge of all the world act with justice?"

The LORD replied,
"If I find fifty innocent people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." Abraham spoke up again: "See how I am presuming to speak to my Lord, though I am but dust and ashes! What if there are five less than fifty innocent people? Will you destroy the whole city because of those five?"

He answered, "I will not destroy it, if I find forty-five there." But Abraham persisted, saying "What if only forty are found there?" He replied, "I will forbear doing it for the sake of the forty." Then Abraham said, "Let not my Lord grow impatient if I go on. What if only thirty are found there?" He replied, "I will forbear doing it if I can find but thirty there."

Still Abraham went on,
"Since I have thus dared to speak to my Lord, what if there are no more than twenty?" The LORD answered, "I will not destroy it, for the sake of the twenty." But he still persisted: "Please, let not my Lord grow angry if I speak up this last time. What if there are at least ten there?" He replied, "For the sake of those ten, I will not destroy it."

Reflection Process / Questions

- **5 mins Reading** - underline a word or idea that strikes you
 - **5 mins Writing** - write what you have heard, write your response to a reflection question(s) that attracts your attention
 - **5 mins Sharing / Praying** - share with a friend or pray to God about livingtheword you have heard.
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- Confidence before God in prayer is a theme of our readings this week. Abraham is bold and has a very real and honest conversation with God about the sinful town of Sodom (See Gen 19). What strikes you in this conversation, what do you learn about Abraham? What do you learn about God?
 - Consider having an extremely honest conversation with God. What would you talk about? Would you push God to side with the righteous and what would your specific request be today?
 - In Middle Eastern Cultures 'honour' is extremely important. Abraham uses God's honour and leans on God's name and reputation being 'held high'. In your own family / culture or school / workplace, have you experienced a request to keep the 'family name' upheld, the 'school reputation' in good standing in the community or to represent your culture 'well'? Why was this considered important? What happened? Do you consider yourself bearing the name / honour / reputation / image of God? The Church? Does this affect your behaviour in any way?

Reading 2 Col 2:12-14

Brothers and sisters:

You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. And even when you were dead in transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he brought you to life along with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions; obliterating the bond against us, with its legal claims, which was opposed to us, he also removed it from our midst, nailing it to the cross.

Gospel Lk 11:1-13

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread
and forgive us our sins

for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us,
and do not subject us to the final test."

And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey and I have nothing to offer him,' and he says in reply from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.' I tell you, if he does not get up to give the visitor the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence.

"And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish? Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg?

If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

- Circumcision was the removal of the foreskin from a man's body. It was considered a 'badge' of honor marking a chosen people as belonging to God (and all in his family too!). Jews in the Colossian community were trying to force Gentiles to undergo circumcision and be obedient to the many Jewish laws that would 'save' them. St Paul again teaches that Baptism replaces circumcision and something far more radical than a flesh mark has happened. All sin and 'transgressions' against the law have been nailed to the cross. Have you ever thought of yourself as having been buried during your baptism? And your rising is Christ's rising. You live now not for the world but for God. What does the badge of baptism mean for you?
- The disciples request for a 'prayer' was common between a Master and disciples. Followers of a particular religious leader would ask for a prayer that set them apart and gave them a special 'identity'. Read the short Lukan 'Our Father' prayer slowly. It is a programme for life and discipleship. Consider
 - Our Father in the Hebrew is 'Abba' which is very close to our use of the word 'Dad' - what sort of relationship is Jesus revealing God has toward us. What attitude of mind or feeling in your heart does this generate?
 - Holy Be Your Name is an honour request so important in middle eastern cultures. A Fathers / Family name is honoured in the community through the children, their lives, acts of justice, hospitality. Is your Christian life and witness bringing honour to God's name? Are you lowering God's reputation? Is the Church giving honour to God's name in the world today?
 - Your Kingdom Come. The prophets cried out in public of God's desire to see Mercy and Justice come. Honestly examine your life-style. Are you chasing possessions, power and prestige OR people, justice and mercy? Our prayer is not to be merely words but a battle cry.
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?