

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading 1 Is 66:18-21

Thus says the LORD:

I know their works and their thoughts, and I come to gather nations of every language; they shall come and see my glory. I will set a sign among them; from them I will send fugitives to the nations: to Tarshish, Put and Lud, Mosoch, Tubal and Javan, to the distant coastlands that have never heard of my fame, or seen my glory; and they shall proclaim my glory among the nations. They shall bring all your brothers and sisters from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses and in chariots, in carts, upon mules and dromedaries, to Jerusalem, my holy mountain, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their offering to the house of the LORD in clean vessels. Some of these I will take as priests and Levites, says the LORD.

Reading 2 Heb 12:5-7, 11-13

Brothers and sisters,

You have forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as children: "My son, do not disdain the discipline of the Lord or lose heart when reproved by him; for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines; he scourges every son he acknowledges."

Endure your trials as "discipline"; God treats you as sons. For what "son" is there whom his father does not discipline? At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain, yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it.

So strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees. Make straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be disjoined but healed.

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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- The final chapters of the Book of Isaiah are filled with apocalyptic images of how the 'end of times' will be. Every nation, language (Tarshish = Spain, Put and Lud = North Africa, Tubal and Javan = Asia Minor) will be gathered to Jerusalem. But this will first require God to 'set a sign among them'. God requires missionaries to witness to God's ways and take responsibility for being 'living signs' of God's love. What does being a 'sign' mean for you? Do you feel responsible for being God's representative among your peers? What would be your biggest challenge? Fear? Who is a good role-model (sign) of faith for you and how could you imitate them?
 - The Letter to the Hebrews was to Jewish Christians. Many were struggling with persecution and trials from Jewish Religious Leaders for their belief in Jesus. They were frustrated that Jesus had not 'returned' quickly as they had hoped. They are downcast with drooping hands and weak knees! They are invited to see struggles and trials as 'discipline' which comes from the word 'disciple' which comes from the word to learn and be educated. What is one struggle you are having currently. What is it teaching you?

Gospel Lk 13:22-30

Jesus passed through towns and villages, teaching as he went and making his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few people be saved?"

He answered them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough. After the master of the house has arisen and locked the door, then will you stand outside knocking and saying, 'Lord, open the door for us.' He will say to you in reply, 'I do not know where you are from. And you will say, 'We ate and drank in your company and you taught in our streets.' Then he will say to you, 'I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you evildoers!'

And there will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out. And people will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at table in the kingdom of God. For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."



"The Lord will say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.'"
Luke 13:25

- Jesus is on his way to his final days in Jerusalem and he challenges all who have a conversation with him about getting ready for the 'end of time'. This sparks a question - 'will only a few people be saved'? Jewish people assumed they were the 'few' and sinners, unclean people, unbelievers were the 'many' who would not be saved. How would you respond to a friend if they asked 'will only a few be saved and go to heaven'? Where did you get your image of God to back up your belief and answer?
- Jesus does not answer the question but gives an image - a crowd is trying to get into a house but all must go through a narrow 'door'. There will come a time when the door will be closed and people left outside. If this scene was really going to happen how could you be prepared? What does it mean to be 'inside the house'?
- Jewish people understood they had a special status of 'chosen' by God. They presumed this also meant they had a special entry permit 'through the door'. 'We ate and drank with you, you taught us!' They are absolutely surprised with the possibility that other people, 'sinners', could get into heaven before them. 'But I have listened to the Gospel stories on Sunday and have shared in the Eucharist' could be a modern Catholic response. It is not enough to 'be there' on Sunday, we are called to 'do something' on Monday... to be a 'sign' of God's forgiveness, welcome, shaping the world into becoming one family. What would you consider the Church needs to 'do more of'? How could you be involved?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?