

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading 1 Wis 9:13-18b

Who can know God's counsel, or who can conceive what the LORD intends? For the deliberations of mortals are timid, and unsure are our plans. For the corruptible body burdens the soul and the earthen shelter weighs down the mind that has many concerns. And scarce do we guess the things on earth, and what is within our grasp we find with difficulty; but when things are in heaven, who can search them out? Or who ever knew your counsel, except you had given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high? And thus were the paths of those on earth made straight.

Reading 2 Phmn 9-10, 12-17

I, Paul, an old man, and now also a prisoner for Christ Jesus, urge you on behalf of my child Onesimus, whose father I have become in my imprisonment; I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I should have liked to retain him for myself, so that he might serve me on your behalf in my imprisonment for the gospel, but I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that the good you do might not be forced but voluntary.

Perhaps this is why he was away from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a brother, beloved especially to me, but even more so to you, as a man and in the Lord. So if you regard me as a partner, welcome him as you would me.

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.
- The Book of Wisdom was a Jewish response to the wisdom writers and Greek Philosophers seeking to understand the meaning of life. Written for Jews in Alexandria, the international and cultural centre of the time, many Jews were giving up their faith and adopting a Greek philosophy. Greek Philosophy taught that human nature was 'against God' and we could not 'know God'. The Wisdom writer teaches we can be in tune with the Holy Spirit of God so our paths can become 'straight'. What do you think? Have you experienced the guidance of the Holy Spirit at any point in your life?
- Philemon was a convert of Paul and he was obviously wealthy enough to have slaves. Onesimus was a slave of Philemon who had escaped, found Paul in Rome, and had become very helpful to him. But Paul found out Onesimus was a 'slave'. He sent him back - with this letter - to his master Philemon. He does not try to change the slavery system, but seeks to change the heart of Philemon to treat Onesimus as a 'brother' and to give him the status of being 'free'. It was a dangerous move. Onesimus could have been killed, or at least be branded with 'f' (fugitive) on his forehead. Why would Paul take such a risk for freedom?

Gospel Lk 14:25-33

Great crowds were traveling with Jesus, and he turned and addressed them, "If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? Otherwise, after laying the foundation and finding himself unable to finish the work the onlookers should laugh at him and say, 'This one began to build but did not have the resources to finish.' Or what king marching into battle would not first sit down and decide whether with ten thousand troops he can successfully oppose another king advancing upon him with twenty thousand troops?

But if not, while he is still far away, he will send a delegation to ask for peace terms. In the same way, anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple."



- Today Luke shares the most radical challenge of following Jesus. Great crowds are following Jesus and he turns to them because they may not truly understand what following him will involve. The disturbing 'cost' of discipleship is that they must 'hate' their family! This is a Jewish teaching method to prove a point. Jesus challenges every disciple he must come first. Above all family relationships. For Jewish people this is upsetting. Jesus is to be preferred before Mum and Dad... Jesus is to be the top social priority of their lives. What does this discipleship challenge mean for you personally?
- Jesus often provides instruction, then offers an image into what living his teaching will look like. Building a house or marching into battle are two of the biggest challenges one might undertake in life. Instead of finances and military supplies, discipleship preparation is the task of being free of attachments to family and possessions. What would this large discipleship preparation task look like for you? Do you want to 'follow? What are your biggest obstacles?
- Freedom in relationships and possessions is a sign of a closer journey with Jesus. Imagine taking a modern person away from family and friends, cell phone and internet. Why is it difficult and why might it be 'necessary'? Is there a relationship you are in which requires more freedom, possessions you may need to give away or your lifestyle simplified so that you may not be so 'entangled' in following Christ?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?