

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading 1 Sir 35:12-14, 16-18

The LORD is a God of justice, who knows no favorites.
Though not unduly partial toward the weak,
yet he hears the cry of the oppressed.
The Lord is not deaf to the wail of the orphan,
nor to the widow when she pours out her complaint.
The one who serves God willingly is heard;
his petition reaches the heavens.
The prayer of the lowly pierces the clouds;
it does not rest till it reaches its goal,
nor will it withdraw till the Most High responds,
judges justly and affirms the right,
and the Lord will not delay.

Reading 2 2 Tm 4:6-8, 16-18

Beloved:

I am already being poured out like a libation,
and the time of my departure is at hand.
I have competed well; I have finished the race;
I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of
righteousness awaits me, which the Lord, the just
judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to
me, but to all who have longed for his appearance.

At my first defense no one appeared on my behalf,
but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against
them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength,
so that through me the proclamation might be
completed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was
rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me
from every evil threat and will bring me safe to his
heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever.
Amen.

Reflection Process / Questions

- **10 mins Reading** - underline a word or idea that strikes you
 - **10 mins Writing** - write what you have heard, write your response to a reflection question(s) that attracts your attention
 - **10 mins Sharing / Praying** - share with a friend or pray to God about livingtheword you have heard.
- The writer of Ecclesiasticus is a writer by the name Ben Sirach. He was the 'headmaster' of an Academy in Jerusalem that mentored Jewish students in the art of living well. His writings are a collection of the best of Jewish thought and philosophy. It contrasts with Greek culture and thought which accepted a huge gap between the rich and poor, those who were 'free' and those who were 'slaves'. Why do you think 'the prayer of the lowly pierces the clouds'?
- Paul is writing from Prison in Rome. In his pre-trial hearing Paul shares that there was no-one who came to support him in court. Imagine his loneliness and sense of betrayal! And yet he does not choose to blame or get angry. Scholars suggest Christians in Rome were afraid of persecution if they came to support Paul. Have you had an experience of hurt from those you thought would support and protect you? Can you say like Paul 'may it not be held against them!' Paul's attention continued to focus on his life imitating the life of Jesus, 'being poured out like a libation (offering)'. In your struggles, is your attention on your 'enemy' or 'Jesus'?

Gospel Lk 18:9-14

Jesus addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else.

"Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity -- greedy, dishonest, adulterous -- or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.'

But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."



"Two people went up to the temple area to pray." Luke 13:25

- Jesus teaches about prayer and righteousness in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. What do the words of the Pharisee's prayer reveal about his attitude toward God and sinners?
- A Pharisee was a strict observer of the law. Going beyond what was required they fasted 2 days per week (Jews were only required to fast on 1 day a year) and tithed on everything they received (even the goods that had already been 'tithed'). They were extremely observant. They enjoyed their 'holy' and 'righteous' reputation. Deuteronomy 26 taught them to bring a 10th of ones produce to the temple, thanking God and asking for God's blessing, and giving to the levite, the foreigner, the orphan and the widow. Has this been fulfilled? Has the Pharisee done anything wrong? Is the Pharisee 'righteous'?
- A Tax Collector (often Jewish) worked with the Roman authorities to collect road charges, goods tax, sales tax. They made significant profits above their contracted price. They were despised by Jews. For a tax collector to make amends, they were to pay-back overcharged taxes with an additional 1/5th to be added. They could never know everyone they had wronged and therefore could never repair their 'wrong' The tax collectors often felt their religious situation was hopeless. They could never be forgiven! Name some of the feelings experienced by the 'tax collector'. What is it about the tax collector that you can relate to?
- The Pharisee encountered only himself in prayer. He was extremely satisfied with himself. Is this prayer? The Tax collector humbly looked to God for mercy. Why is it that God listens to the Tax Collector?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?