

LENT – Day 10 – March 15th

This morning's readings are from Jeremiah. Jeremiah is a very interesting character because he is a number one complainer and he can complain like nobody else can. ☺

Jeremiah 18:18

They said, "Come, let's make plans against Jeremiah; for the teaching of the law by the priest will not be lost, nor will counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophets. So come, let's attack him with our tongues and pay no attention to anything he says."

This is really good news this morning. Look at Jeremiah and the predicament he is having: He is trying to serve the people by giving the word God has given him, and in return he is getting back resentment, reaction, anger and even harm. So it looks out of sync. You're trying to serve God and you're getting a lot of bad reactions.

The question is why?

Why didn't the people embrace Jeremiah and say, "How glad we are that we have a prophet that hears from God, and now God is speaking and directing us. Let's look after Jeremiah because he is bringing the voice of God to us."

Why this reaction?

Jeremiah, when he was listening to God and hearing God - he was ruined for normal life. *He couldn't be like anybody else, because he was having a direct download from God.* What about the other people they were talking about here - those who were teaching the law, those who were priests, and those who were temple prophets?

They were people who were able to live in their time because they were not having a direct connection to God. Instead they were going through the process of Judaism. They were studying the law and explaining it and people could understand it because they were sensible. The prophets were very wise and they explained things in a way where everyone could accept it. Therefore everyone liked them because they were doing things that were acceptable.

But this man was having a download from God and he was saying things that were really disturbing people.

So this morning as I reflected I realized, when you serve God, there are two things you need to do:

- 1. Minister to people**
- 2. Have an internal journey.**

Ministering to people is important but even more important is the inner journey.

If you don't have an inner journey you become disturbed, upset, shattered and broken down inside. So a

lot of people stop an inner journey and decide to live in an acceptable environment. When you start doing that, everyone likes you 1 but if you're of any use to God is a question. So many good people have lived and died and nothing has happened. They have been holy men and women and nothing has happened. They chose to live without suffering, without rejection, without misunderstanding - to live in an acceptable environment.

If you do that, maybe you'll have a good life - **but good for nothing**. In the end they will say, "He was a wonderful person." What did he do? Nothing much, he came and went and everyone liked him. For what? Because he didn't trample anybody's toes. He was polite and nice and everyone was good to each other so it was great. But there was no inner change, no shift in the environment. When you look at it, what Jeremiah said was accurate - but people didn't want to hear it.

Even today we find the same thing in our time. We have a 98% laity that needs to be awakened so that they will all be on a spiritual journey. Not only will the church be alive - but we will change the world. But this mission of awakening the laity is looked at with a deep suspicion by many people. They say, "It looks as if you're all upstarts and doing something you shouldn't be doing. If you conform, we will tap you on the head and say how good you are. But if you're doing something that is disturbing status quo, it's most often you're hearing that voice from God.

In 200-300 years they'll appreciate it but by then you're dead and gone. Look at Joseph Vaz - they were trying to kill him. Why? What kind of evil did he do to deserve death? He didn't do any evil. What he did was, he listened to this inner voice and was on an inner journey, and committed himself to serve people and raise them up when the Dutch wanted him silenced. I'm sure those who were chasing after him were not murderers or psychopaths. They were soldiers given orders and told, "There is a man disturbing our interest. We better capture him or we're going to have problems from these people who have been dormant. He has come and is rousing them up." So they want to kill him out of good reason.

We may be doing it in the same way. Jeremiah was very refreshingly like us because he didn't have any compunction of complaining to God:

Jeremiah 18:19

Listen to me, O Lord; hear what my accusers are saying!

What he is saying is, "God, can't you see what they're doing?" He was not mature enough to understand what was taking place. So he took it unwillingly. **That is the difference. Many of us take it unwillingly - we don't take it from the hands of God.**

- We complain,
- We are angry,
- We are resentful and
- We are serving.

That's the challenge we are having. How to do that is given by the greatest of prophets - Jesus in the gospel.

Matthew 20:17-18

Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death."

There are two journeys. The first journey is what Jesus did –

- He healed the sick,
- He raised the dead,
- He preached the gospel,
- He did wonderful miracles,
- He healed the woman with the hemorrhage,
- He raised the daughter of Jairus,
- He exorcized demons and sent the demons into the pigs.

That's actually a ministry - but we don't only have a ministry. We also have a call to an inner journey.

Many in the world have a ministry but they don't want to have an inner journey. That's why after some time, it becomes only words and a show. We don't want to pay the price.

Jesus understood that. He was not complaining like Jeremiah. Jeremiah said, "O God, why on earth are you sending this on me?" But Jesus said, "This is my mission. God has called me to this." That's what saved the world. It's not his healings and it's not the miracles - they were only signs. What saved the world was this decision he made to walk to Jerusalem. That's where we are challenged this morning. Walk in the inner journey and let the results of the ministry take care of itself. Enjoy walking in the mission of God.

Matthew 20:19

...and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!

He was walking in an internal revelation from God, and he was walking into suffering. Today in the mass, Fr. was reflecting on how the apostles left Jesus at the time he was under pressure. Those days, I hated if anyone asked if I could stand with Jesus, because I knew inside that I couldn't - but I loved to tell other people that. You can ask other people if they're able to do it and somehow we think we are excused.

But if you look deeply at the gospel, the disciples were actually faithful to him and gave up their lives in the end. They were all martyrs - but the difference was that they were baptized by the Holy Spirit by then.

I think our attention shouldn't be not if we have enough will power to be faithful to God. I can tell you that I don't have it, and if you have it, well, good for you. *But you will come to a point when you're unable to do it.* This going to death is not something that you and I can naturally take. But if you're baptized by the Holy Spirit, and you have this direct connection with God and you're on an inner journey - we have the assurance - when the crunch comes - He will work through you.

Jesus is baptized in the spirit and is full of the inner journey of God. He has worked it out in the transfiguration. Moses came and helped him, Elijah came and explained it to him. He made the choice to

walk it to the end, in the power of the Holy Spirit. But he knew these guys didn't have such an experience, and he didn't expect much from them.

Matthew 20:20

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favour of him.

He is talking about going to die and being crucified - they are manipulating and saying, "What about getting a place?" It is shortwave and FM - different wavelengths all together. People who live in the flesh and people who live in the spirit.

So we are not called to generate faith within ourselves and follow Jesus. If you're called like that and you can do it, which means you don't need a Saviour. You can do it yourself, you can make a decision, you can work it out, you can be strong, and you can make up your mind and follow Jesus.

I always used to have a question because I used to hear people say, "You need to be faithful to God to the end." There were people who had strong personalities and I used to work with one who was convinced that if God wants He can do anything. He used to push people to do it.

I remember what happened - it was 1989 and there was a young man who was in the rebel movement and he wanted to surrender himself, but he couldn't surrender because the forces were waiting to execute him. So he came to our movement and he surrendered himself to us, and the next day he would be given up to the army headquarters. But in the night the people came and they surrounded the retreat centre and demanded that this man be given up.

At that moment, the man who drove other people to commitment and said, "You must go to the end," came face to face with his own limitation. He suddenly realized he had to give him up and that shook him and broke him. That day he realized that by your own strength there is only one level that you can go to. I still remember the crisis he went through. He wouldn't talk to anyone, he say by himself and then he asked me, "Why couldn't I have taken a stand and put my life on the line."

That's what happens if you rely on your own strength.

Jesus knew that and that's why he said, "You will drink the cup that I am going to drink - but you will not drink it by your strength. You will drink it by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in you." So the move of the Holy Spirit upon our lives is not only to exercise the gifts, not only to manifest the power in that way - but it is also to give the inner response of Jesus in impossible situations.

Many of us have lost that place. Because of that, though we are ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit, we are defeated at home.

- We are depressed,
- sad,
- unable to deal with issues,
- we can't forgive

We are handling a thousand failures in those places. But we can talk beautifully about the move of the Spirit in life. *We don't realize the dual dimension of the work of the Holy Spirit.*

There are two things that take place simultaneously.

1. You walk to the destiny that God has given us in an inner journey.
2. When you can't, you go to Gethsemane and fall at the feet of the Father.

Jesus knew He didn't have the strength to deal with it. So he goes to the feet of the Father and does the four steps. He says, "Father, can you please take this away from me?" He gives the truth and says, "I can't! Look at these guys - they are sleeping. You want me to die for them?" Then he surrenders and then the gospel says an angel comes and comforts him. That angel is the Holy Spirit. The spirit comforts you to give an inner response.

Instead of waiting for others to change and saying, "O Lord, why don't you change the hearts of these hard people that you have sent into my life?" why don't we ask the Lord to give us the grace to take the inner journey with them?

Each of them are specially selected for you - tailor made and designed, so that we can give the inner response. 😊😊

It's alright to discover you don't have the strength. It's not about you or me anyway

we are not expected to give those responses. He can do it through us. That's why we need intimacy with God.

So when Jesus asks "Can you drink the cup?" They said they would drink it; but they didn't have a clue what it meant - all they were thinking about was getting into those positions of human glory and human honour and recognition. They didn't see anything of the inner journey. He said, "You will drink the cup I am going to drink, but the places are decided by the Father."

When I take this for the four steps, I speak about Bishop Fulton Sheen when he explains how the other ten were waiting for these two. When they caught the two they said, "Both of you have gone on the sly and have taken the two big positions! What about us!" Everyone was having their own agenda. So you must remember - all of us start from the flesh. There is nobody who starts from the spirit. All of us start with small motives, little aims, little goals.

I saw Kauchi and Dush come in and they are a part of our team for many years.

Dush was not a catholic and he was a Buddhist. When they came to see me for the first time, Kauchi introduced Dush to me. I asked him, "Why did you come for the meetings?" He was very honest and said, "I followed her and wanted to see where she was going." We always come with some limited human motive but you grow through it. That is the inner journey.

A lot of people see growth in the work you do. "I'm preaching to a 100 people and when the word of knowledge came, it became true and then I prayed and a healing took place." That's one journey; but the other one is this inner journey - responses to God, living under an open heaven, enjoying His favour and knowing that you can deal with the crisis that life can throw at you because He is going to deal it with you.

That's where the whole thing gives hope to other people. A lot of us pretend we can because we have no other option. Some of us pretend we don't have a problem and we resist. We think that somehow we are responsible, we have to change, we have to do it. Relax - He will do it. Admit it! "I should be giving this inner response but I can't." So what do I do? I come to the Lord and say, "Lord, enable it inside of me." "Lord, I have these fears and I shouldn't be having it but I'm having it. Lord, I bring it before you."

You relax, become at peace, deep within you are rested and you know that He is dealing with it. Quietly when you look back, you suddenly realize how far we have come. Why? Because you haven't come by your own strength - you have come by this journey within.

Today is a day to rediscover inner journey. All of us will carry a cross and some are custom made to allow us into the kingdom of God and it will be a blessing for other people.