Study Notes for the Sunday Mass Published by Christians for Christ Ministries. We are a non-denominational Christian ministry that seeks to encourage and facilitate Christians in studying the Holy Scriptures. **"For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus."** 1 Timothy 2:5

Sunday Mass Study Notes for Lectionary 668: 11/02/2025



Welcome back to the Sunday Mass notes for 11-2-2014. This week we open with the second reading from Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans where we learn about the hope given to us through Jesus Christ. Then we conclude with the Gospel lesson from Saint John in which we learn how those that hold saving faith in the Lord Jesus can never be separated from His love.

Introduction to the First Reading:

The first reading is from the Apocryphal Book of Wisdom.

First Reading:

Wisdom 3:1-9
The souls of the just are in the hand of God,
and no torment shall touch them.
They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead;
and their passing away was thought an affliction
and their going forth from us, utter destruction.
But they are in peace.
For if before men, indeed, they be punished,
yet is their hope full of immortality;
chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed,
because God tried them
and found them worthy of himself.
As gold in the furnace, he proved them,
and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself.
In the time of their visitation they shall shine,
and shall dart about as sparks through stubble;
they shall judge nations and rule over peoples,
and the Lord shall be their King forever.
Those who trust in him shall understand truth,
and the faithful shall abide with him in love:
because grace and mercy are with his holy ones,
and his care is with his elect.

In this reading, we see how, even though God allows trials in the lives of believers, He will deliver them in the end. Unlike "sparks through the stubble," which ultimately burn up and turn into nothing but dust, the "faithful shall abide with him in love." We will see something almost exactly like this in today's Gospel reading.

Introduction to the Second Reading:

The second reading is from the fifth chapter of Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans. The big idea of this chapter is that although death came through Adam's sin, life and hope came through Jesus Christ. Chapter 5 opens with the adverb "therefore," a word that means a logical consequence. When we see this word, we must ask, "What is it there for"? In this case, the word provides a link to the previous chapter. Paul explained in detail in chapter 4 how Abraham was justified by his faith and not by his works. Paul cautioned the Romans that anyone who thought they would be justified before God because of their works was incorrect. Works flow out of a believer who has been justified by faith. Paul said, "Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is

due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness" (Romans 4:4-5). Though Abraham's works were mighty, they were not the reason he was justified before God (Romans 4:2). Justification is a theological concept that God forgave his sin as if he had never sinned. Paul quoted from the Old Testament Book of Genesis. He said, "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Romans 4:3). God imputed His righteousness to Abraham because of his faith in God's promises (Romans 4:22). This promise extends to all who trust in the Lord Jesus. Paul continued, "Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead"(Romans 4:23-24). Paul reemphasized this in his letter to the Ephesians, saying, "8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10).

The verses before today's reading provide more important contextual information. Can you imagine going to Mass and hearing the readings without ever understanding the context again? This section, beginning with the "therefore" we just discussed, introduces the concept of hope that will be important during the reading we look at later. Merriam-Webster defines hope as "to cherish a desire with anticipation, as in 'hopes for a promotion.'" Read the introductory verses of chapter 5 and discover how hope comes about in the life of a believer.

> *1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; (Romans 5:1-4)*

We know that as Christians we are justified before God, meaning that we stand before Him with our sins forgiven "just as if we have never sinned" (v. 1). God has put our sins as far as east is from west and remembers them no more (Psalm 103:12). We stand in our belief through God's grace (v. 2a) and "exalt in hope of the glory of God" (v. 2b). We don't relish any other hope, but that of both seeing in the future and experiencing in the present the active work of the glory of God in our lives. This is how we can persevere through tribulation (v. 3), which then brings about "proven character" (v. 4a), which finally leads to hope (v. 4b). In summary, we first exalt in hope of the glory of God, God allows tribulation to give us perseverance that leads to proven character and finally hope for our own souls.

Therefore, with all of these things in mind, such as how a believer is counted worthy before the eyes of God on judgment day, let us proceed to the reading.

Second Reading:

> *5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. 6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (Romans 5:5-11)*

Hope comes from God working through our trials to produce godly character. When we finally receive hope from God through our perseverance and subsequent godly character, this hope "does not disappoint" (v. 5a) "because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (v. 5b-ff). If this weren't enough, the mystery of all of this is that "while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly" (v. 6). However, "one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (vv. 7-8). Contemplate this moment: Christ, who knew that we would sin in the future, died for us on the cross 2,000 years ago, knowing us and willingly bearing the penalty of our sins for us. Paul continues, saying that not only have we **been** forgiven by Jesus' past, once for all work on the cross, but we are also **being** saved from the future wrath of God through Christ's actions (v. 10). We were reconciled with God (v. 10), or made right with Him, through the blood of Jesus Christ. Finally, we can "also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (v. 11). God's active acts of sanctification in our lives in an already, not yet sense are the heart of the Christian life. Imagine the mystery of it all once again. "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; perhaps for the good man, someone would dare even die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (vv. 6-8). How can we not just praise God for what He has done!

Hope is something possessed by true believers in Jesus Christ. In contrast, have you ever known anyone who lived year after year in a hopeless state after losing his or her longtime spouse? If such a person doesn't have a living faith in the Lord Jesus, they can be the picture of hopelessness. I know such a person, and without knowing it, their spouse was the one who gave them hope for living. Once they passed away, the source of hope was gone, and the person who remained living lapsed into an extended state of hopelessness. Each time I read about and contemplate the hope that I have in the Lord Jesus, I think of this man whose wife left him behind without hope. Others can give us joy and temporal hope, but the Scripture is clear that the only source of eternal hope is in God. How many of us unknowingly place our hope in the hands of another person rather than in the Lord God Almighty? Would you please say a quick prayer for this man, that God would open his heart to receiving the truth of the Good News of the Gospel?

Introduction to the Gospel Reading:

As we move on to the Gospel lesson from Saint John, we will see the promise and assurance from God to Jesus that anyone who believes in Him will not suffer the wrath of God, as we saw in the first reading. The context is after Jesus' feeding of the five thousand along the shores of the Sea of Galilee (John 6:1-14). Afterwards, the people were about to take Jesus by force and make Him their King (John 6:15). Jesus fled from them and separated Himself from His disciples. Later that night, the disciples found Jesus walking on the water (John 6:19). The crowd clamored after Jesus, wanting more of the material blessing (in this case, bread) but not necessarily wanting the commitment to follow Him for their spiritual needs.

Gospel Reading:

> *37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:37-40)*

Jesus explains here what true faith is: believing in Jesus. The bottom line is that those who hold saving faith in the Lord Jesus can never be separated from His love. In His foreknowledge, God knows who will come to Him in faith. Those that do come to Him will never be separated from God

and they will be raised up with an eternal body on the "last day" (v. 40). The faith of a believer is given to them as a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9).On the other hand, those who do not believe will not be raised up on the last day and will instead suffer the eternal wrath of God. It is a mystery of God but a condition of the fallen world that some people come to believe in Jesus and be rescued from God's promised wrath, while others persist in their unbelief and suffer damnation in hell. It may not be politically correct to say this, but it is God's truth. God calls us to minister to those who don't believe, and to bring the knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ, without which no one comes to the Father (John 14:6).

These verses can challenge us to consider whether we are like the crowd. First, do we only want Jesus for material benefit, or are we true believers trusting that Jesus will raise us up on the last day? If the answer is the latter, then these verses provide much comfort, knowing that we cannot lose our salvation. If the answer is the former, take some time to confess to God the Father your desire to be a true believer in Jesus Christ.

Saint Paul also discussed how believers could never be separated from the love of God.

> *35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)*

We can persevere through our tribulations and hope from God while never being separated from the love that is in Jesus Christ (v. 35). As you go through this week, remember to pray for and even to reach out to those who don't have the hope that you hold onto through your faith in Jesus Christ.

Bottom Line: Questions for Reflection

1. How is God's hope (as discussed in Romans 5) different from the hope the world provides? How

have you experienced God's hope in your own life?

2. Many who do not understand Christianity claim it is an "exclusive" religion. How do the words in the Gospel reading confirm and counteract this notion? How can you be an ambassador for Christ, dispelling the myth that Christians are judgmental, exclusive, and unloving?

Mass Study Notes for Sunday 8-23-2015



Welcome back to the Sunday Mass notes for **8-23-2015**. This week the readings focus upon the theme of God calling people to walk in a personal relationship with Him. In the first reading from Joshua, we see a challenge issued by God to forsake the false gods the people's ancestors served. In the second reading, Saint Paul teaches about the relationship between man and his wife and the mystery of how this parallels that between the Father and the Son. In the Gospel lesson, we study a story where Jesus' followers came to a point of decision concerning His identity as God in the flesh, the promised Messiah, the nature of whom they misunderstood.

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Introduction to the First Reading:

The first reading is from Joshua who was the successor to Moses after the Exodus and the one who led the Hebrew people across the Jordan after Moses' death. The reading today provides an overview of the monumental charge from Joshua to serve the One true God.

First Reading:

Joshua 24:1-18 NAS95 1 Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel and for their heads and their judges and their officers; and they presented themselves before God. 2 Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. 3 'Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. 4 'To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau, and to Esau I gave Mount Seir to possess it; but Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt. 5 'Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt by what I did in its midst; and afterward I brought you out. 6 'I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and Egypt pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. 7 'But when they cried out to the LORD, He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them and covered them; and your own eyes saw what I did in Egypt. And you lived in the wilderness for a long time. 8 'Then I brought you into the land of the Amorites who lived beyond the Jordan, and they fought with you; and I gave them into your hand, and you took possession of their land when I destroyed them before you. 9 'Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel, and he sent and summoned Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. 10 'But I was not willing to listen to Balaam. So he had to bless you, and I delivered you from his hand. 11 'You crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho; and the citizens of Jericho fought against you, and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Girgashite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Thus I gave them into your hand. 12 'Then I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before you, but not by your sword or your bow. 13 'I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.' 14 "Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15 "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." 16 The people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; 17 for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. 18 "The LORD drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God."

After forty years of wandering in the desert under the leadership of Moses, the people who were still

alive migrated across the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Upon entering the land they encountered many obstacles the foremost of which was their immersion into a culture of idolatry which wasn't too different from that which plagued Abraham's father Terah (v. 2). Joshua presented to them the heart of the matter by saying, "choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living" or the One true God (v. 15). This was God's call to the people for a relationship with Him with the terms of the relationship being to serve Him alone and not the gods of the surrounding nations. The people answered that they would indeed serve the Lord God and not the gods of the Amorites.

We know from reading the rest of the Scriptures how short-lived the Hebrew's promise was not to serve other gods and in effect creating a division between the true followers of God and the rest of the people. Because of their disobedience, God later sent foreign nations to invade their land including the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and finally the Romans. Joshua was in the first camp, saying "but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (v. 15). As we will see later in the Gospel lesson, Jesus confronts the people with a similar decision. Will they follow Him, or instead follow their religious traditions? Will they follow the Father God, or their father the devil? Will they enter by the narrow road, Jesus, or follow the broad road to destruction (Matthew 7:13)?

Introduction to the Second Reading:

The second reading is from Ephesians 5. The context leading up to this passage is a treatise on how Christians should relate to one another. Saint Paul's teaching then zeros in on the model of submission between a husband and his wife, linking this as a reflection of the relationship between God the Son and God the Father, as well the church to Christ.

Second Reading:

Ephesians 5:21-33 NAS95 21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. 22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

The big idea in the reading is the nature of the relationship that exists between the believer and God. In the same way that the Jews in the first reading had a decision to make regarding their spiritual direction, all believers, not just Christian husbands and wives, have to come to grips with their personal relationship to God and how He calls them to live out this relationship with Him. Paul opens the reading by saying that everyone (married, unmarried, widows, and widowers) must "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ" (v. 21). This is the foundational concept upon which he builds his explanation of biblical submission between and woman and her husband, which parallels the mysterious relationship that exists between Jesus and the Father (v. 32). Because "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28) we too are to serve others in mutual submission to God ("in the fear of Christ," v. 21). This includes not only wives serving their husbands, but husbands serving their wives and everyone serving each other in the church family. For Paul said in 1 Corinthians, "But now there are many members, but one body" (1 Corinthians 12:21).

Continuing upon the relational concept in the reading, Paul described how the husband is the visible leader of the family by using the word translated "head" (v.23), which in the original Greek connoted "something that can be seen and taken a hold of." The idea is that the wife is to voluntarily place herself under the leadership of her husband. In the same way that Jesus is equal to God the Father, but different in His role, so the wife is equal in status to her husband, but different in her role. Jesus' submission to the Father does not make Him inferior (Philippians 2:6-11), only obedient. So, too, the wife's submission to her husband in the Lord does not make her inferior to her husband, but it does allow her to be obedient to God. This model of the harmonious union between one man and one woman goes all the way back to the Book of Genesis: "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH" (v. 31). The unity between the man and the woman in marriage parallels the mysterious relationship between Christ and the church (v. 32). The Bible is clear that both the man and woman are called to be in mutual submission to God, while the woman is to submit to her husband and the man to God as the final authority. The man is called by God to be the visible ruler of the family by first separating himself from the headship of his own father (v. 31). This is the man's conscious point of decision to leave his earthly father and join with his wife in a new relationship that leads to unity under his Father God. It's as if God tells the man, choose whom you will serve.

As we move onto the Gospel lesson, we will see how Jesus' teaching of the crowds resulted in their coming to their own point of decision regarding whom they would serve.

Introduction to the Gospel Reading:

Today's reading from John marks an important point in his Gospel concerning a point of decision and division. The reading contains the famous John 6:66 passage, the numbering of which brings with it the idea of the mark of the Antichrist, the great divider who is to come in the future who will separate the true believers from among everyone in the world. The concept comes from the Book of Revelation. *"16 And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, 17 and he provides*

that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six" (Revelation 13:16-18). In the End Times the people will be given one final choice regarding who they will serve. At this point God will make a clear division between the followers of God and the only other choice, the followers of the AntiChrist. In the Gospel reading, Jesus' teaching reaches a similar climax in which Jesus calls the people to a personal relationship with Him. Although they are not outright called to decide to which camp they belong, a clear division occurs beginning in John 6:66 which begins the separation of the wheat and the chaff (Matthew 3:12). God uses these moments of decision to reveal His true followers such as the occasion in which Saint Paul stated, "For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you" (1 Corinthians 11:19).

Gospel Reading:

John 6:60-69 NAS95 60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" 61 But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? 62 What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. 65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." 66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. 67 So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" 68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. 69 We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

This story in John marked the beginning of several such points of decision in which the people were challenged to choose between the ways of God by following Jesus or the ways of man by following false religion and their own traditions. In this reading, the people came to the point of decision when they had heard Jesus' prior statements about Him being the "bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:58). The conflict that the people had with Jesus that caused their grumbling (John 6:43) was that they were familiar with Jesus' father Joseph and also his mother (John 6:42). Jesus was calling Himself God and since they knew his earthly parents, they reasoned that He could not be God. The people also misunderstood the nature of the Messiah because just a few verses later they said, "However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from" (John 7:27). This point of division continued into the group of His twelve disciples, for Jesus knew that one of them (Judas) had already separated himself from Him. The grumbling of the larger group of disciples then resulted in a separation of the true followers of God and everyone else. As this separation occurred, Jesus presented to the twelve a challenge causing Peter to take a stand for Jesus, affirming everything that Jesus had been saying about Himself. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God" (vv. 68-69).

This passage teaches us that belief in Jesus is the way to eternal life. Some of the Jews were offended that Jesus, a mere man in their eyes, would claim to be God. However, if He was the Messiah, then His demand for their belief and loyalty was justified. In some sense, everyone has to come to terms with Jesus' claim to be the only way to eternal life. Some will be like the offended Jews, who stumbled over what they saw as far-fetched claims and rejected Jesus' lordship over their lives. But others respond like Peter and say: "Lord" (which is a good way to start a sentence when you are talking to God in the flesh) . . . "You have the words of eternal life" (vv. 68-69). May we continue to believe in Christ as Lord and let Him work in us the type of life that leads to eternity with the Father.

One day while I was driving, I happened upon a man walking in the afternoon along the road who seemed to be in a hurry to get somewhere. He was wearing black wingtip shoes, which kind of stuck out to me. I had never seen this particular man before. My spirit prompted me to pull beside him and offer him a ride, which he gladly accepted. He told me that his bicycle had broken down and that he was on his way to work at the local supermarket. I encountered this man several times over the course of the next few months and each time he presented himself in such a kind, godly way that I actually began to think that he was an angel. As he found out more about my faith he began to praise and glorify God for all that He had done in my life. Perhaps it was because I didn't know him very well, but each time we met I sensed his close relationship with God. It also helped that his real name was Angelo! It wasn't until I met his wife that I finally understood he really was just a man (see Matthew 22:30).

After several encounters with Angelo, it really got me thinking about how **I** come across to the random people that I meet. Does my public persona match how I come across to people personally? How about my persona on Facebook; does it match what I truly believe? Considering Facebook, it seems to me to be okay to post that you are attending a Saturday afternoon wine tasting session; however, it is problematic when all that a person posts is about food and wine.

Like Angelo, when people meet us we should exhibit the markings of a follower of Jesus Christ. Which path are you **continuing** to choose in your daily walk with God? Joshua said in the first reading, "Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD," "choose for yourselves today whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:14, 15b). Paul said in the second reading to "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ" (Ephesians 51), a behavior which can only be done through the empowerment of God's Holy Spirit as a new creation in Christ. Finally, Jesus said, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" (John 6:67b). Each day we have to choose the forsake "Egypt" and choose the pathway to walk with God. Although we make certain bad choices at times that dishonor God, the Scripture says that "if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Bottom Line: Questions for Reflection

1. What have been some of the turning points in your life, especially as you consider your

relationship with God? How have you turned from being offended by Christ's radical call on your life to a place of surrender and submission to His lordship? Are there areas of your life that you are still wrestling for control? How might these passages help you to surrender anew to His lordship?

2. If someone watched your life, choices and attitudes, to whom or what would they attribute your devotion, worship and loyalty? What things would they see to show them that you are choosing this day (and every day) to serve the Lord? What things would give a conflicted and confusing message to them of your heart's true home?

Readings for the Week

Note: For a listing of readings for the Roman Catholic Mass visit this web site:

http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/082315.cfm

Source(s):

Online Scripture verses for most Bible versions can be found at: http://www.biblegateway.com/

Scripture quotations taken from the NASB

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