

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, June 28, 2020

Love God Above All Else

Written by Angie Windnagle

2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16A

Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

Matthew 10:37-42



In college as a missionary there were many moments of contradiction. I would find myself in the presence of the materially poor and desire to do whatever I could to alleviate their suffering, but often families would insist on serving and feeding our group. It seemed so contradictory. How could I accept food from someone living with dirt floors and a palm thatched roof knowing I didn't truly need it? Eating with the poor transformed my heart as I understood their gift wasn't meant for me specifically. It was their way of saying, "Lord, I love you more than food itself. Lord, in receiving those you have sent, I will receive my reward." They understood the gospel in a deeper way than I had ever experienced in my life. My team and I believed we were bringing the gospel to the poor. In truth, we were living the gospel with them, receiving as much as we were giving.

That seems to be the mystery of the readings and gospel this weekend. God is calling us to move beyond what makes us comfortable and seek to serve and love Him above all else. Oftentimes, we want to be in charge and know the plan in our lives. Our postmodern minds approach holiness as if we know the general flow, so we can take liberty with the rest, curating our own faith as we see fit. The readings this weekend turn this notion upside down. God speaks to us not as an optional side character in our stories, but as the passionate lover determined to make sure we know that the way to true happiness and freedom can only come from Him. The only way our stories will make sense is in light of the greater story of God's plan of salvation for humanity.

We see this clearly in the first reading when the woman in the story believes she is the one blessing Elisha and houses the prophet. In the end, the prophet blesses her and she receives far more than she sought to give. God will never be outdone in generosity, but His invitation requires a response and willingness to serve Him instead of our own ideas. Do we trust God like the poor and the woman serving Elisha? Do we trust He knows our needs before we speak them? Do we trust that He can be loved more than our earthly loves and only gain from that?

This theme runs through the second reading as well when St. Paul urges us to be “dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.” The way of the gospel is the way of contradiction in our world today and a call to be on guard against all the traps of sin. Being dead to sin requires examining all facets of our lives. While fighting for justice, we can’t be trapped in gossip. While seeking forgiveness, we can’t condemn those who are different from us. In order to be truly free, we must root out sin where we find it in big and small ways.

This culminates in the gospel when Jesus tells us exactly *how* to do all of this — love God above all else. Like the poor who were willing to give everything just for a group of missionaries who came in God’s name, we are called to love God above all else in our lives. We are called to put things in the right order and trust He will care for our needs. While seemingly harsh, Jesus is inviting us into the love of the Trinity in a deeper way. If we love God above all else in our lives, He will give us the unexpected blessing of being able to love others even more, since there is no real love apart from God.

Angie Windnagle

PRAYER

God, my Father,
may I love You in all things
and above all things.
May I reach the joy which You have
prepared for me in Heaven.
Nothing is good that is against Your Will,
and all that is good comes from Your Hand.
Place in my heart a desire to please You
and fill my mind with thoughts of Your Love,
so that I may grow in Your Wisdom and
enjoy Your Peace.
Amen.

[-Prayer to Love God Above All Things](#)