

Homily of Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C, 2022

Habakkuk 1:2-3, 2:2-4; Psalm95:1-26-9; 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14; Luke 17:5-10

Prophet Habakkuk prophesied in Judah about 600 years before Jesus Christ. At that time, there were political decadence and abandonment of worship of Yahweh. The first reading was a section of Habakkuk's lamentation over the state of affairs in Judah. Habakkuk questioned God about his silence over his and the people's cry and lamentation: "How long, O Lord? I cry for help but you do not listen! I cry out to you, 'Violence!' But you do not intervene. Why do you let me see ruin; why must I look at misery? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and clamorous discord." Habakkuk 1:4 which is not included in the first reading says, "This is why the law is numb and justice never comes, for the wicked surround the just; this is why justice comes forth perverted."

There are people whose condition is as it was for Judah, and like Habakkuk, in their grief and desolation they think that God is silent. They ask God many questions: "Why me?" "Why this?" "Why that?" "Where are you, God?" "Where are your promises." And many other questions. Some people think that it is not proper to ask God questions. Questions addressed to God with faith are prayers in themselves. Jesus prayed on the Cross with a question to God in Psalm 22:1, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). Habakkuk assures us that if answers delay, we are to wait. "It will not be late. ... The just one, because of his faith, shall live" (Habakkuk 2:2-3). The same assurance is given by Jesus, "Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily" (Luke 18:7-8). Prophet Isaiah says, "No, the hand of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Improper questions to God are questions addressed to God with doubt and unbelief.

St. Paul in the second reading encourages us not to lose our faith. He says, "Beloved: I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control..." (2 Timothy 1:6-7). "Take as your norm the sound words that you heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:13). In this passage, St. Paul teaches us that faith produces power, love, and self-control. Lack of faith produces weakness, fear, and fall.

In today's gospel, we read, "The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' The Lord replied, 'If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would obey you'" (Luke 17:5-6). Here, Jesus reveals to us the power of faith and why we need to fan our faith into flame.

Yes, our faith in God will be tested as that of the servant who came in from hard work in the field. The servant was not allowed to get some rest. Immediately, the servant's master sent the servant to the kitchen to prepare food for him. After the servant prepared and served him the food, the master ordered, "Put on your apron and wait while I eat and drink. You may eat and drink when I am finished" (Luke 17:7-10). He remained obedient and faithful. St James writes, "The testing of your faith produces perseverance" (James 4:3). The resting of our faith should not produce turning away from God, but perseverance.

The victory over this world is our faith (1 John 5:4). St. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:7, "We walk by faith, not by sight." Jesus bade some persons farewell with reference to their faith: To the repentant woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (Luke 7:50). To the Samaritan healed of leprosy, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well" (Luke 17:19). To the woman healed of hemorrhage, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering," (Mark 5:34). To blind Bartimaeus, "Go, your faith has healed you" (Mark 10:52). Jesus encouraged Jairus, "Do not be afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:36).

What will Jesus say to me about my faith?

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