

Thursday, June 25, 2015

Today there are people claiming to be Christians who seem to say all the right words and perform the required rituals but in fact live lives that totally contradict Jesus' gospel teaching. Obviously that is not a new problem since Matthew raises it in today's gospel. Matthew is absolutely convinced that discipleship is not about saying the right words and making the right gestures. In this matter he reflects accurately Jesus' own position. Discipleship is basically pragmatic. It is taking the teachings of Jesus and putting them into practice. It is not primarily about creating theories of discipleship and the church. It is not first and foremost a philosophy or even a theology. Discipleship is a total way of life configured to put into practice the teachings of Jesus. The parable about the fate of houses built on rock and on sand emphasizes the point that hearing the words of Jesus is not enough no matter how well they are understood. They have meaning only when actualized, when put into practice. Words alone can construct a beautiful house but the first storm will totally destroy it. Words that have been heard and put into practice will produce a house that can withstand any storm. This teaching of Jesus has withstood the test of centuries. It is as relevant today as it was when he taught it. But it still needs to be put into practice rather than debated, argued, and endlessly discussed.

THURSDAY OF THE TWELFTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME
L 374-I

READING I [LONG FORM] Genesis 16:1-12, 15-16

A reading from the Book of Genesis

Hagar bore Abram a son and he called him Ishmael.

Abram's wife Sarai had borne him no children.
She had, however, an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar.
Sarai said to Abram:

“The LORD has kept me from bearing children.

Have intercourse, then, with my maid;
perhaps I shall have sons through her.”

Abram heeded Sarai's request.

Thus, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan,
his wife Sarai took her maid, Hagar the Egyptian,
and gave her to her husband Abram to be his concubine.

He had intercourse with her, and she became pregnant.

When she became aware of her pregnancy,
she looked on her mistress with disdain.

So Sarai said to Abram:

“You are responsible for this outrage against me.

I myself gave my maid to your embrace;
but ever since she became aware of her pregnancy,
she has been looking on me with disdain.
May the LORD decide between you and me!”
Abram told Sarai: “Your maid is in your power.
Do to her whatever you please.”
Sarai then abused her so much that Hagar ran away from her.

The LORD’s messenger found her by a spring in the wilderness,
the spring on the road to Shur, and he asked,
“Hagar, maid of Sarai, where have you come from
and where are you going?”

She answered, “I am running away from my mistress, Sarai.”

But the LORD’s messenger told her:

“Go back to your mistress and submit to her abusive treatment.
I will make your descendants so numerous,” added the LORD’s
messenger,

“that they will be too many to count.

Besides,” the LORD’s messenger said to her:

“You are now pregnant and shall bear a son;
you shall name him Ishmael,
For the LORD has heard you,
God has answered you.

This one shall be a wild ass of a man,
his hand against everyone,
and everyone’s hand against him;
In opposition to all his kin
shall he encamp.”

Hagar bore Abram a son,
and Abram named the son whom Hagar bore him Ishmael.
Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

The word of the Lord.

Thursday, June 25, 2015

Or:

[SHORT FORM]

Genesis 16:6b-12, 15-16

A reading from the Book of Genesis

Hagar bore Abram a son and he called him Ishmael.

Abram told Sarai: “Your maid is in your power.

Do to her whatever you please.”

Sarai then abused her so much that Hagar ran away from her.

The LORD’s messenger found her by a spring in the wilderness,
the spring on the road to Shur, and he asked,

“Hagar, maid of Sarai, where have you come from
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RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 106:1b-2, 3-4a, 4b-5

R⁷. (1b) Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Or: R⁷. Alleluia.

All: R⁷. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Or: R⁷. Alleluia.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his mercy endures forever.

Who can tell the mighty deeds of the LORD,
or proclaim all his praises?

R⁷. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Or: R⁷. Alleluia.

Blessed are they who observe what is right,
who do always what is just.

Remember us, O LORD, as you favor your people.

R⁷. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Or: R⁷. Alleluia.

Visit me with your saving help,
that I may see the prosperity of your chosen ones,
rejoice in the joy of your people,
and glory with your inheritance.

R⁷. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Or: R⁷. Alleluia.

ALLELUIA

John 14:23

∇. Alleluia, alleluia.

R⁷. Alleluia, alleluia.

**∇. Whoever loves me will keep my word,
and my Father will love him
and we will come to him.**

R⁷. Alleluia, alleluia.

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GOSPEL

Matthew 7:21-29

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

The house built on rock and the house built on sand.

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’
will enter the Kingdom of heaven,
but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

Many will say to me on that day,

‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name?

Did we not drive out demons in your name?

Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?’

Then I will declare to them solemnly,

‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.’

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them
will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.

The rain fell, the floods came,

and the winds blew and buffeted the house.

But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock.

And everyone who listens to these words of mine

but does not act on them

will be like a fool who built his house on sand.

The rain fell, the floods came,

and the winds blew and buffeted the house.

And it collapsed and was completely ruined.”

When Jesus finished these words,

the crowds were astonished at his teaching,

for he taught them as one having authority,

and not as their scribes.

The Gospel of the Lord.