

25th Sunday of the Year – A

Is 55:6-9; Phil 1:20-24, 27; Mt 20:1-16

Listen with ears of tolerance,
See through eyes of compassion,
And speak with the language of love.

Today's readings speak about the human sense of justice contrasted with the overgenerous grace of a merciful God. God rewards us, not in the measure of what we do, but according to His good will. In the first reading, Prophet Isaiah reminds the exiles in Babylon that their God is more merciful and more forgiving than them. He is ready to pardon the infidelity which has resulted in their exile. Their merciful God will bless them with material and spiritual blessings. Ps 145 - reminds us that, although "*the Lord is just in all his ways,*" He is at the same time "*gracious and merciful.*"

Today's Gospel tells us, the story of the landlord's love and generosity represents God's love and generosity to us. God's provisions for our spiritual lives will never run out, and when we share our blessings with others, we tap into the inexhaustible Divine supply. The story shows us how God looks at us, sees our needs and meets those needs. The question in God's mind is not, "How much do these people deserve?" rather, "How can I help them? How can I save them before they perish?" It is all about grace and blessings.

Isaiah reminds us that the God of Moses and of the prophets doesn't think in the same way that we do. God is more merciful and forgiving than we are. As Isaiah reports, "*'My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord.*" Perhaps we would have a better world if we were to adopt some of God's ways instead of asking questions like, "Why should the innocent suffer?". God is always near to us in this life, and if we remain near to Him on this earth, we can trust in His love and goodness to keep us near Him forever in Heaven.

This parable illustrates the difference between God's perspective and ours. Perhaps it disturbs our sense of fairness and justice. Our sense of justice seems to favor the laborers who worked all day and expected a wage greater than that given to the late comers. Perhaps most people would sympathize with the workers who had worked longer and seemingly deserved

more. We can understand their complaint since, for most of us, salaries are linked to the number of hours of work. If workers have the same skills, the same hours of work and similar responsibilities, we expect them to get the same wages. But God doesn't see matters in the same way that we do.

How can we practice generosity in our lives? We can be generous in the way; we give a person encouragement and a kind word when they are feeling down even though that person might not be our friends. We can be generous in the way; we give of our time to help someone going through a bad time. When someone says something that offends us, we can be generous in our reaction and sympathize, rather than give back the pain, just as it was given to us. When we have fallen out with someone or believe we have been unfairly treated, we can be generous in our willingness to reach out and restore friendships. When someone really irritates us, we can be generous with our patience and kindness and deal with that person in a way that reflects the generous nature of God. When we see people who lack the basic necessities needed for a happy and healthy life we need to be generous with what we have been given by our generous God.

We need to follow God's example and show grace to our neighbor, when someone else is more successful than we are, let us assume he needs it. When someone who does wrong fails to get caught, let us remember the many times we have done wrong and walked off free. We must not wish pain on people for the sake of fairness. We become envious of others because of our lack of generosity of heart. Envy should have no place in our lives. We cannot control the way God blesses others, only rejoice that He does so, just as He blesses us.

We need to express our gratitude to God in our daily lives because God personally calls each of us to our own ministry and shows us His care by giving us His grace and eternal salvation. To God, we are more than just numbers on a payroll. Our call to God's vineyard is a free gift from God, for which, we can never be sufficiently thankful. All our talents and blessings are freely given by God. So, we should express our gratitude to God by avoiding sins, by rendering loving service to others, by sharing our blessings with the needy, and by constant prayer, listening and talking to God always.

Pope Francis says: "The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel."