

## **Homily For the 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time- Year A**

**St. Peter's Sat. 5:00/7:00 PM & Sun. 8:00 AM - June 27/28, 2020**

**2 Kings 4:8-16** "Elisha, the holy man of God, said: At this season, in due time, you shall embrace a son."

**Psalms 89:1-18** "I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever."

**Romans 6:3-11** "We have been buried with him. Consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ"

**Matt 10:37-42** "Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it."

### **Receive Your Life From Jesus**

#### **Introduction:**

A prophet goes onto [booking.com/ancient](https://www.booking.com/ancient) Israel, looking for a meal and a room while on special prophet assignment from God. He sees an ad from a woman looking for a holy man of God to rent a simple room with a bed, table, chair and lamp. The holy man is the prophet Elisha. When she meets him, the woman doesn't have to see his Prophet I.D. She can just tell. There is something godly about him that she is open to recognize. And so she receives the 'Man of God', Elisha, into her home.

That's not quite how it happened, but there is the sense of hospitality being extended to one who is doing God's work. And, because we see the New Testament revealing what was hidden in the Old Testament, our invitation and our challenge today is to recognize the ultimate man of God, the super substantial man of God, Jesus Christ. Will we receive him into our homes and our hearts.

#### **Elisha and Jesus**

A few weeks ago, our scriptures told about when the prophet Elijah met a woman who had a son but no food, and so was facing death with her son. Elijah multiplied her food and so saved the woman and her son. We should see a foreshadowing of what Jesus did when he multiplied food for a large group. The first miracle points to a much bigger one.

Now we have Elijah's direct successor, who meets a woman with plenty of food, but she has no son. This matters because, although she and her husband are comfortable, it tells us that her husband is old. She will eventually be widowed and, without a son, no one to provide for her.

Elisha was Elijah's apprentice, who was given a double dose of his master's miraculous powers, receives from the woman what she can offer. She has all the worldly stuff and she puts them at the service of the prophet carrying out God's mission. She then receives as her reward what she cannot give herself or what the world can give, the life of a son.

Again, this foreshadows, in salvation history, the gift that the source of the man of God's holiness, God himself, gives to the whole world, a son, God's only begotten Son. What we see in glimpses in salvation history before Jesus, is given to the world in an exponentially greater amount in Jesus himself. That is the truth of our story.

Will we be hospitable to him or will we do what much of the world is doing today - rejecting and trampling on God's gift of himself. The world cannot benefit from this son if it is not ready to receive him. And no one can receive this gift if they have already been satisfied by loving the things of this world, even the good things of this world.

### **Jesus and Our Lives**

Today, Jesus will speak about the challenge of hospitality to God. You won't be worthy of me if you love your father, mother, son or daughter more than me or if you won't take up your cross, a brutal instrument of torture, and follow me. He is talking to his Apostles, those who will be charged with his mission. As with Elisha, he is asking a lot of them. If we flip it around just a little bit, though, it might make more sense. To be worthy of Jesus, which means to be ready to receive his life into ours, you must:

Love him even more than the most precious things you have, your closest relationships, which he himself gave you in the first place, so that you would learn to love others.

Further, taking up one's cross does refer specifically to walking with Jesus, following Jesus, receiving his sacrificial but life giving love. It means giving up pursuits that cannot give us life and hang out with the one who gives life to the fullest. To be worthy of Jesus is to realize I must prepare a room for him in my heart.

God has given us a Son to bring about supernatural life in us. If we go about looking for life in the natural world, fulfilling all of our desires by the things of the world, we will lose the life that has been given to us. But Jesus says if you lose your life for his sake, it's never really lost. It just makes room to receive his life in us. I need to let go of the things I think are so great so I can receive what God wants to give to me. The worthy disciple does not love father, mother, son or daughter more than Christ.

Although not every disciple will be called to actual martyrdom, all are called to die daily to self. Those who seek happiness in life by pursuing their own interests will never be fulfilled. Only by giving one's self to God and others do we experience the lasting fulfillment God wants us to have.

In his books, *The Great Divorce*, C.S. Lewis tells a story about a man in purgatory ... The man with the demon on his shoulder. An angel comes to him and offers to kill the demon so he can enter heaven. But the man isn't ready. He still loves the things it suggests to him, the things of this life. Finally, he lets the angel kill the thing on his shoulder and he enters the fullness of heaven. We must face our sin and the need to let that die. If we don't kill the sin in ourselves, then our souls will be killed. God is ready to do that, but we have to ask. We have to want to receive that greatest of hospitality, the kingdom.

### **Paul and Jesus**

Paul looks at this same problem from the contrast between the pre and post baptismal life. Life is a type of slavery, either to sin or to God. Except slavery to God is aligning ourselves with the only one who has truly set us free from our slavery to sin. Should we keep sinning so we can experience grace? Of course not.

Paul shows how believers, through participation in Christ's death, experience for themselves the defeat of both sin (now) and death (later).

Believers have died to sin in baptism. People are baptized 'into' Christ. and they believe 'into' Christ. It is a kind of death experience. This new life is, therefore, an experience of dying and rising. This is a present resurrection in this life.

### **Call To Action**

We are facing the choice again. What are we prepared to let die in us so that we might live fully, live joyfully, live without fear, so that we might join ourselves to Christ, who was sinless but died because I sinned, who was abandoned and betrayed and tortured and killed because we turned from God to ourselves, in pride, but who did it anyway, so that we could walk with him through that valley of death, so that we could really experience life, the fullness of life.

Even the demons know what is at stake. They know who he is and what he is offering: Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God. And yes, like the angel in C. S. Lewis, Jesus has come to destroy the demon in us, but only if we let him, only if we don't attach ourselves to this world. Only if we make a way for him to fill our cup.

We are waiting for medical science to be our saviour right now. We should cheer them on. But we are placing an awful lot of trust in that science instead of in God.

We are pretending that it is possible to eliminate racism through demonstrations and by being outraged with hatred. It is good to desire discriminatory systems to change. The problem is that we will not be able to root hatred out of our systems because that's not where it begins. Toxic hatred lives in our hearts.

Only by starting there, being willing to let Jesus himself kill it in us, only by picking up that cross, our own toxic hearts, will we be able to do what the psalmist says: go and tell what God has done for you. Go and tell of God's promises fulfilled in your life. Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth. How awesome are your works.