

Homily For Tuesday of the 4th Week of Ordinary Time - Year II St Peter's 8:30am/7:00pm Masses - Jan 30, 2024

2 Sam 18:9-30;19:3+ "The victory that day turned into mourning for the king was grieving for his son."

Psalm 86:1-6 "You are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call to you."

Mark 5:21-43 "Do not fear. Only believe. The child is not dead but sleeping."

Winners and Losers

Introduction

Perhaps many people can relate to a son or daughter who have turned away from faith, and even resent it being mentioned. For most of us this feels like a great loss. It is agonizing, in some way as if we have lost them.

2 Samuel - David the King

David's son, Absalom, even turned against his father, developing an army to take over the kingdom, perhaps being willing to kill his father in the process. It's not even the last time a son of David does this.

Absalom is not a person of high character. He is vain and arrogant and ambitious. He is also likely resentful of his father. There is evidence that David can take some responsibility for not having taught his sons properly.

Sacred Scripture shows us many things without giving specifically worded moral messages. Absalom's beautiful long hair is caught in a tree as he was riding under it. What an irony for a young man who thought highly of his looks. It ends up killing him.

We also see David's general, Joab, going against his king's wishes in killing Absalom when he was vulnerable, against the king's wishes to take the young man captive. Again, David has to bear some responsibility for the killing of his own son. Joab is a ruthless murderer and had done this exact same thing previously, with no discipline coming from the king. Another lesson is told in the bible. Letting evil people have influence over one's life will lead to evil. David's own character

has become weak and he suffers grievously for it. He wishes he could take the place of his son, whom he loves deeply, despite being a traitor to his father and his nation.

David's forces are victorious over Absalom, but no real victory is possible when one has turned away from God. The rebellion, begun in pride, ends in utter humiliation. Even the victorious army is made to feel ashamed. It could be anything in my life that causes me to steal glory from God who gave me everything I have.

St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans, that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. David's lament over his son is God's lament over our waywardness, our sin. But our Saviour does give himself up for his sons and daughters. He does die in our place so that we might live. Through faith, we who were dead in our sins, are now alive in Christ (Eph 2:5).

Mark - Jesus, the New King

This is one of the meanings of these two wonderful healings, the 12 year old daughter of Jairus, and the unnamed woman with a 12 year illness. Many touched him but only one was healed. Many receive Jesus on Sunday but only a few have the faith to allow their lives to be transformed. Faith is what unlocks the power and grace of God enters into our hearts to change us.

Touching Jesus, she can feel how her body is completely healed. Jesus says to her: "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be free of this illness." Everywhere around us there has been a tremendous loss of faith. Jesus weeps for us, his beloved. Let us fall down before him like Jairus and like the healed woman. Jesus, my God, who died in my place. I thank you with my tears and my supplications that you have given me the life I could not give myself.

Called To Conversion

Jesus always responds to a prayer offered in faith." (CCC 2616) Do you have something to ask of Jesus today? Is there some issue that invites you to have faith in him who heals? The miracles Mark tells us about are signs of how he is going to

free us from the most terrible of ailments, our sins, and sin itself. Perhaps we have felt that something precious was dying inside us or near us. Perhaps we have felt that we could not stop the bleeding in our own lives. Today, we are asked to reach out in faith, allowing God to have victory in us. Of course, we must continue to pray for those near us who are not guided by faith. We need to touch Jesus on their behalf.

Scripture tells us today that often what seems like victory is really a defeat. But it also tells us that faith in the one who appeared to be defeated but was the victor over sin and death is also our victory. Let us say with Pope Benedict: "We ask God to heal so many problems, our practical needs, and this is right, but what we must ask him for insistently is an ever firmer faith, so that the Lord may renew our life." (Benedict XVI) Jesus always responds to a prayer offered in faith." (CCC #2616)

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *The Lord is the strength of his people.*

Collect: *Grant, O Lord, that we may always revere and love your holy name.*

2 Samuel: *Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. His head caught fast in the oak and he was left hanging. Joab took three spears and thrust them into the heart of Absalom. Now David was sitting between the two gates. The king said to the first messenger, "Turn aside and stand here." Then the Cushite came and said, "Good tidings for my lord the king! The Lord has vindicated you this day." The king said, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" The Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king be like that young man." The king wept and said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom. Would I had died instead of you, my son, my son!" So the victory that day was turned into mourning for the troops heard, "The king is grieving for his son." The troops stole into the city that day as soldiers steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle.*

Psalm: *Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you. Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all day long. For you are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call you.*

Mark: *Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well. So Jesus went with him. And a large crowd followed and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and only grew worse. She said, "If I but touch his clothes I will be made well." Immediately her haemorrhage stopped and she felt in her body that she was healed. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about and said "Who touched my clothes?" The woman fell down before him and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace." Some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Jesus said to the leader, "Do not fear, only believe." Jesus saw people weeping loudly. He said, "The child is not dead but sleeping." They laughed at him. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about. She was twelve years of age.*