

Homily for February 24, 2019

7th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Our GPS of Life

If I were to ask you your philosophy of life, could you tell it to me? Most of us don't think about our life philosophy, the operating set of beliefs that drives our worldview. Our philosophy of life comes out of us in subtle ways: the attitude we wake up with in the morning, how we treat other people, how we approach a new situation, the things we spend our time, energy and money on.

It's worth taking a moment to examine our life philosophy because, in many ways, it creates our legacy. It's like a GPS for our life. Most of you have had some experience with a GPS system in your automobile or, perhaps, your smart phone and know how it works. You program your destination into your GPS and it gives you the directions you need to get where you need to go. These technological wonders are a great gift to many of us, especially those who are "directionally challenged."

As I was thinking about the analogy of the GPS with our philosophy of life, I was inspired by this verse in 1 Corinthians 15:

But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.¹

In 1 Corinthians 15 we have the longest chapter of all Paul's writings, it is 58 verses long. In the verse I just quoted we have the theme of the chapter. In this life we inhabit a physical body like the body of Adam, the first man. In the life to come we will inhabit a spiritual body, that will ultimately be like the resurrected body of Jesus, the second man from heaven. Paul is teaching that to know our final destiny, which is to bear the image of the one in heaven, informs how we live in this physical body now.

So, let me give you the acronym:

- Grace in the
- Physical and the
- Spiritual

This is the philosophy of life, the GPS laid out for us in today's readings. Now remember the word grace is tied closely to the word love. To love means "to will the good of the other as other". In the fulness of the spiritual and resurrected life in the New Heaven and Earth, our ultimate goal, love will be all in all. We will always will the good of the other, because the

¹ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (1 Co 15:46–47). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

perfected human – the saint, will fully radiate the love of God. Therefore, to be grace-filled in the present is to live in these physical bodies as we will one day live in our spiritual bodies.

Our reading from the Old Testament inspires us to see what can happen to a person in whom grace, and love are active. David, wills King Saul's good. Now for months Saul has been David's enemy because his heart is filled with jealousy and fear that David is going to usurp his authority and take the throne from Saul. We, as the reader know that David will never do such a thing, because Saul is the anointed king, a position David fully honours. Saul, however, is blind to David's loyalty and comes after David with three thousand chosen men of Israel; in other words, the most loyal and best soldiers in his army.

Let me fill in the climatic scene between David and Abishai. Abishai was David's nephew, being the son of David's sister Zeruiah. His reputation as a belligerent warrior and defender of David is attested by his desire to kill the sleeping Saul (1 Sam. 26:6-9). There are other instances in the Bible that make it clear that Abishai's philosophy of life was: Might makes right! Get vengeful and get even, often! Listen to his council:

God has given your enemy into your hand today; now therefore let me pin him to the ground with one stroke of the spear; I will not strike him twice.”²

Uncle I will not miss..... we all know people like this don't we? What in your philosophy of life is in any way like that of Abishai? Not to the point of pinning someone with a spear, but perhaps with your words, your texts, social media posts?

Listen again to David's response and to the words he then speaks to Saul from the other side of the encampment:

Do not destroy him; for who can raise his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?”

Then to Saul he says:

I would not raise my hand against the LORD's anointed. ²⁴As your life was precious today in my sight, so may my life be precious in the sight of the LORD, and may he rescue me from all tribulation³

Do you hear the difference between Abishai and David? For Abishai all we have is the physical life. Not for David, he is so in tune with the spiritual that he upholds the Godly ordained office and Saul, entrusting justice to God, “the Lord will strike him down or his day will come to die” He also underscores Saul's inherent dignity in saying “as your life was precious today”.

² [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (1 Sa 26:8). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

³ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (1 Sa 26:22–24). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

What was David's "GPS?-

Grace in the physical and the spiritual?

Exactly what Jesus teaches in today's Gospel:

But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.⁴

How do we love this way? Only by realizing this is a supernatural love that is imparted to those who ask for an increase of grace to love in the physical world the way we will one day love in the spiritual world. Some people say this is just irrational. How can we love like this? Well it is important to remember that in Greek there are different words for love. The word used here is not the word for romantic love, maternal love or friendship. It is the word for the love of God, which is to will the good, even of our enemies, for as Jesus says, God is:

is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

Why would we do such a thing and love this way? Listen, to Jesus' answer:

Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High⁵

What reward? Well ultimately the one in heaven but even more so for now, our reward on earth. By treating those who will our harm by willing their good, we are not being controlled by their philosophy of life, but by Grace in the Physical and the Spiritual. We want to embody now what will one day be fully obvious - that we are children of the Most High – who according to our Psalm for today:

***is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.***⁶

This is to be our GPS that will direct us through this physical world to one day bring us safely to the spiritual world where as Paul says:

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (Lk 6:27–31). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

⁵ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (Lk 6:35). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

⁶ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (Ps 103:8–10). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven⁷

Set your GPS with your destination in mind and so receive the supernatural grace to grow in this love that is heaven sent to bring us safely home to heaven.

Let us pray:

“Jesus, we pray, help us to love as you love, even now and so increasingly bear your image”.

⁷ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (1 Co 15:49). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.