

Homily for March 23, 2017

How hard it is for us to truly hear.... I think of all the times children confess not listening to their parents or the times I hear spouses admitting that they do not really hear and listen to one another. I think of all the times people confess not listening to the voice of their own conscience.

Our readings for this evening are about hearing and truly listening. They have an important lesson for us; we can freely obey the voice of God and likewise we can freely disobey his voice. It is our choice. Because of our predilection towards sin, Jeremiah says we are prone to disincorporate our ear towards God. Instead we walk in the stubbornness of our evil will and our own counsels.

As a result Jeremiah says "Truth perishes and is cut off from our lips."

The perishing of truth is particularly expressed in this evening's Gospel where Jesus is said to be aligned with Beelzebul. Now this was a term used to describe the devil and was very demeaning. It meant "Lord of the Dung Heap". We see here how clearly truth had perished from the lips of those who were opposed to the Lord's message and witness.

We need to be aware that there is in every generation a wilfulness to not listen to the prophets of God or to His Messiah, Jesus Christ. Such perishing of truth leads to confusion and division.

It is important for us to therefore daily to choose to come before the Lord our maker and listen to his voice so that we do not harden our hearts.

One of the ways we are to do this is by attentively listening to our conscience. I say to kids, you're your conscience is like a traffic light. When it turns yellow we need to slow down, when it turns red we need to adhere to its call to stop. But just as someone can disobey the red light and have to live with the consequences.... Sometimes they get away with it; sometimes they will be ticketed, and sometimes accidents and death can result, so too with our conscience. If we continually disobey it, there will be consequences that eventually will have detrimental effects. The heart will be hardened and truth will perish.

If, however, we learn to do the truth we know as spoken to us by our conscience we will in turn be open to the truth we need to know. That is the truth that has been revealed to us in the Word of God and supremely in the teaching of Jesus. Those whose lives are guided by a quickened conscience will also have lives framed by God's truth. We will be empowered to stand against the assault orchestrated by the father of lies, the devil, who always wants to divide and conquer.

Jesus on the other hand wants to overtake the strong man so that the Lord's House is united in the truth and goodness of Jesus. So, says Jesus, we are to remember that daily there is a

contest. The devil wants truth to perish, Jesus wants truth to flourish. To be with him is to be with those who gather the truth. To be against him is to be with those who scatter the truth.

Daily we are to sing:

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!
7 For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.