

Second Sunday of Lent - Lectionary: 25

Reading 1 [GN 12:1-4A](#)

The LORD said to Abram: "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you."

Abram went as the LORD directed him.

Responsorial Psalm [PS 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22.](#) - R. (22) Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

Reading 2 [2 TM 1:8B-10](#)

Beloved: Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God. He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Gospel [MT 17:1-9](#)

Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid."

And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, "Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

The Promise of being authentically Awesome requires humility

(College Student Mass – Campus Ministry Jax - No Audio Version available)

If we are to “become what we touch”, authentically awesome... we’re going to need to listen to Him and do what He says. In order for us to do that, we’ll need to possess the human virtue of humility and manifest it in obedience.

St. Bernard defined humility as: "A virtue by which a man knowing himself as he truly is, abases himself." St. Thomas said: "The virtue of humility consists in keeping oneself within one's own bounds, not reaching out to things above one, but submitting to one's superior." Humility simply defined is: A quality by which, a person considering his own defects in the light of Christ, embraces the words of Christ in Matthew: *“the last shall be first, and the first last.”* In the way that Jesus explained to the disciples whom he called to Himself saying, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. “It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” The disciple that possesses this virtue is then able to willingly submit himself to God and to others for God's sake."

When parents teach children, fulfilling the baptismal promises they made, they want the kids both to hear and to heed what they are saying. God the Father wants the same thing. The 75-year-old Abraham listened to God, as he must have been doing for a long time in his life. This time, God spoke plainly and directly, and although God was clear about what Abraham was to do, He wasn’t clear about why. Still, Abraham he did what God asked. Generations later, in the Magnificat of Mary, she praised God for the fulfillment of the promise; “He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever.” You and I are among the recipients and participants of that promise and it’s continued unfolding in the world.

Humility and Obedience go hand in hand. Without one, the other is impossible. It’s like the example of a child, when told to clean their room, who stomps down the hall and slams the door. Eventually, the child has a choice. He can either humbly accept the parent’s instruction and clean his room, or he can remain stubbornly defiant. We, too, have a choice, just as Jesus portrayed in the garden of Gethsemane, to be humble is to be obedient.

Without an extraordinary revelation, Abraham couldn’t have understood the fullness of the meaning of God’s call. He could envision some of the challenges that obedience would bring and hardships that could follow, but not the awesome and amazing, history making, world shaking through the centuries, monumental events that would all culminate in the incarnation, passion, death and resurrection of the Son of God. He could not have foreseen any of it, he could only do as today’s Psalm says, trust God and be obedient.

Because Abraham had learned to be humble and obedient to God, he was able at this most critical moment, to recognize the voice of God, to hear it, to listen and to do what God asked, even without understanding. This is the key for us as well and the goal of the penitential seasons, to form us as humble and obedient servants. The hardest part of the life as a disciple of Christ is this, and so for many reasons we refuse to let Him. A major obstacle is that we just don’t like being uncomfortable physically or spiritually.

Listening to God, hearing and heeding his voice in our life, almost always leads to discomfort. But why is this a surprise? We see over and over again in Scripture, examples of our humble fathers and mothers in faith listening to God and obediently responding. Abraham would have come to know this as an Israelite and among his tribe. God had a plan for humanity and Abraham was an essential part of the plan. It never would have occurred to him that the path would be anything less than challenging and life threatening.

How could we expect it would always be comfortable for us? Being an authentic disciple of Christ can lead to suffering and division. As Christ said in Luke 12: *"I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."* Truth is, the narrow way is wrought with things that will challenge us... so if you are serious about Christ, then get over it and move on.

Penitential seasons like Lent, are for us a bold reminder of the path we must follow to the fulfillment of the promises of God. Like Abraham, Paul and all the Saints before us... the path cannot be walked without being able to humbly listen to Him and obediently do what He asks. With or without understanding or expectation of comfort. As Paul said in the letter to the Philippians, *"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."* Phil 2:5-8, *"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."* Phil 2:12-13

To listen to the Son of God and to do what He asks, is imperative for all who want to be saved. Listen to Him who came to change our lives by transforming us, to "save us and call us to a holy life," as St Paul wrote in the Second Reading.

How will you practice listening? How will you grow in humility? In the Gospel of John we read, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God."... "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."* Immerse yourself in the living Word of God. Learn to listen to Him alongside those to whom he was speaking directly. Enter into Him as he draws you increasingly into His life, helping you to understand His truth and empowering you to live His way.