

August 27, 2015 Monica

First Reading 1 Thessalonians 3: 7-13

Paul is planning a trip to visit them. (He has sent Timothy to report back to him how they were doing, and the report was good.) Paul was apparently troubled by some previous news about problems in this community. But this reading emphasizes how important the faith of this community is in his own (Paul's) relationship with God. He prays for their unity.

Gospel Matthew 24: 42-51

Jesus warns again about always being ready for the Master's arrival, likening his followers to servants of the Master.

One can sense Paul's concern in his letter to the Thessalonians. He's possibly had some information about their confusion about this new religion in a Greek colony, where the people would have had a 'many-god' Greek religion. He seems to be worried that he hasn't had enough time to teach these new Christians what sort of life this would be.

And Jesus in the Gospel seems to be concerned as to whether their new faith would be a true part of their actions and their lives. And, of course, in both cases their concern was justified. It's human nature to grow comfortable with a new idea and then to have that comfort change gradually into indifference. When we first take God's existence seriously, and realize in spite of our deficiencies and sins that God loves us, it may thrill us and create in us an emotional and/or spiritual 'high.' But, human nature doesn't usually live with that high level of awareness of God and little by little we begin to slack off and our religious practices become more habitual (still good) but less thrilling. Our other concerns in life – survival, growth, duties to others, etc – begin to absorb us. This is a natural progression and not wrong, but it can lead to religious concerns being ignored. God becomes less important in our lives. This attitude may lead to sin, because our consciences are not consulted.

So, how can we stop this gradual weakening in our love for God? Well, if you're meditating regularly, that's probably the most important thing you can do. I don't mean idle musings, but true mental prayer where you try to engage with God, especially by using the Scriptures as guides. This habit of prayer should gradually lead to a continual awareness and conversation with God. He'll keep you on the path to Him and let you know His will for you.

Ask Him now to keep you close to Him. Ask Him to help you with mental prayer and ask His help in developing the habit of continual prayer. If you're like me, many of these 'walking-around' prayers will be simply, "Thank you!"