

Homily Resources for 17th Sunday Ordinary Time A, July 26, 2020

Readings: 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12, Psalm 118, Romans 8:28-30, Matthew 13:44-52

Summary: The theme this morning is the importance of the wisdom (understanding) of the heart in relation to recognizing the value of gaining the Kingdom of God.

1. Commentary on the passages:

O.T. – Solomon’s choice for wisdom: “Give your servant an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong.” He selflessly asks for an understanding heart so that he will be able to deal well with people; he asks for “a heart with skill to listen”. Note the problem with his wives/sons.

Let’s consider “wisdom.” **Wisdom** is the power of judging rightly and following the soundest course of action, based on knowledge, experience, and understanding. It is deeper and more profound than **information**, which applies to facts; **knowledge**, a general body of facts and to the ideas inferred from these facts and connotes an understanding of what is known; **learning** is knowledge acquired by study; **erudition** implies profound or abstruse learning beyond the comprehension of most people; **data** involves facts or figures from which conclusions can be inferred. **Wisdom** implies superior judgment and understanding based on broad knowledge.

2. What about judgment? It is far too easy to say that we are never to judge. Not true.

Matthew 7:1-5 is not a prohibition against all judgment but a warning against hypocritical or rash judgment. *“Judge not that you may not be judged...remove the beam from your own eye; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother’s eye.”*

1 Cor 5: 11-12. *“For why should I be judging outsiders? Is it not your business to judge those within? God will judge those outside. “Purge the evil person from your midst.”* (See the passages on discipline).

John 20:22-23. *“Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”* Within the sacrament of confession is one of the most important elements of judgment within the Church. We can never absolutely judge a person’s final destination, heaven or hell, we can only judge the external signs. But we must make discerning judgments, for our protection and our own salvation, in order to correct others, and in order to determine how to involve our time, talent and treasure for or against issues. Note that Solomon did not request wisdom for marriage and family issues.

3. Epistle: We can be assured that God will bless us with wisdom since He is calling His people through the stages of spiritual growth needed for enjoying eternity with Him. That means that if we place ourselves close to Him and His resources, we will receive the wisdom that we need. How do we do this? First is the hearing of and study of the Word of God (Rom 10:14 -17). Then prayer, worship, the Sacraments, and Christian fellowship and sharing (See Matt 25:31-46).

4. Gospel: Chapter 13 of Matthew is composed of 7 parables of the Kingdom. Our readings today show the supreme value of the Kingdom of Heaven. Every set of parables contains a teaching concerning the value of the Kingdom as well as a warning of the cost of not gaining the Kingdom.

- 1. What does it mean to gain the Kingdom of God?** William Barclay suggests “to be in the Kingdom is to accept and to do the will of God.” Remember the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Therefore, to enter the Kingdom is to accept and to do God’s will.” One becomes a member of the Kingdom (on the earth, the Church) when one is baptized and especially when confirmed, becoming a disciple of Jesus (CCC 541, 546). **So, then, it is worth anything to do God’s will and become a disciple?**

The Navarre Bible commentary guides us: “God calls everyone to salvation but only those attain it who receive God’s call with good dispositions and who do not change their attitude (perseverance).

Practical application: How to identify truth and wisdom in the treatment of COVID-19

1. Initially there was no particularly helpful treatment for this illness, and furthermore, from Germany came a report that it could be easily transmitted before a person became an active case.
2. Then a report came from France through Laura Ingram of the use of hydroxychloroquine which had had a 100% success rate.
3. Instead of interest and positive investigation of a useful treatment, immediately criticism arose about the danger of side-effects and dangers of the drug.
4. However, my doctor friend showed me on an official website that the hydroxychloroquine was six times safer than ibuprofen or aspirin. Furthermore, the drug had been used for fifty plus years with not particular concern for any side effects. Furthermore, a member of our parish said she had been on it for years with no significant warnings nor adverse effects.
5. Then a number of democratic governors prohibited its use and mandated that COVID-19 senior citizens had to be sent back infected into their nursing homes, bypassing other treatment centers, resulting in some 20,000 deaths.
6. Then my doctor friend reported to me that he had treated over 200 other patients for diseases other than COVID-19 for as long as ten years with success and no negative side-effects.
7. Then the studies which had been conjured up to call its use into question were found to be so fraudulent that they had to be withdrawn from prestigious medical journals. My doctor friend sent me links to all the studies documenting the fraud.
8. Then doctors reported to me that their medical licenses were being called into question if they were using hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID. Their livelihood was being threatened.
9. Then my doctor friend reported to me that he had treated 30 COVID patients with 100% cure rate.
10. Then it was reported that pharmacy boards were instructing pharmacists not to dispense this medicine for this diagnosis.
11. My doctor friend then reported to me that he had treated 72 patients, 71 freed of the virus in 3 days, one patient took 5 days. None went to the hospital. None were intubated.
12. Then I found from my doctor at Christus Trinity Clinic that they would not use the hydroxychloroquine with any patients because of its dangerous side effects and questionable reports.
13. Then State Senator Bob Hall, republican, did a virtual town hall with six doctors with remarkable success in treating this disease with this medicine. These doctors were not asked how they did it nor what were their results, they were harassed and persecuted. I wondered why? Why wouldn't our medical leaders, who had no effective answers, not investigate the successes of others with an open mind?
14. Then I found two doctors in Mabank and Dallas who were using this procedure. They let me list their names and practices in my bulletin.
15. Then my doctor friend reported he had healed successfully 100 out of 100 patients.

How would you make a wise decision? Do we not have to have dependable data? Most basically, we would need **someone we could trust**. Do I trust doctors who may have become politicized or interested in monetary gain? How about my doctor friend who kept giving me data? He is someone I know personally to be honest. He was the one I could trust most. This is how I have attempted to gain wisdom in this situation.

Gaining data in order to make a wise decision can be very difficult and time consuming. Where do you believe you can go for honest data for moral decisions for how to live? Are you willing to do the work and the thinking to sort out what is going on? May we be willing to do so, like selling all to buy the land, or to buy the pearl of great price. Are we willing to do the hard work to be judged worthy in the Church when we are judged? Will we decide like Solomon to ask God for wisdom above all things?