

11th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Dear brothers and sisters, today's Gospel story tells us about God's infinite mercy and human greed.

“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Lord, have patience on me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt” (Mt. 18:23-27).

This servant got all his credit as a gift. It would seem what happiness! But no, money changes a person. This servant demonstrated this when he met another servant who owed him only 100 talents and had him thrown in prison. Because of his actions, the indignant king asks his servant, "...should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" (Mt. 18:33).

The Apostle Paul gives us the following counsel, “Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all...if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:17-18, 20-21).

Instead of remarks, criticism, or condemnation towards another person, it is better to show a good example of humility, patience, mercy, and forgiveness. May our good example help others grow spiritually and gain an understanding of their mistakes. "...love one another with brotherly affection..." (Rom. 12:10). Honor one another with respect. "For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy; yet mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:13).

Jesus Christ invites us, his children, to show patience, humility, and mercy, to forgive offenders, and even to love our enemies. In the eyes of the world, this looks like a weakness when a person usually wants to be strong, confident, and protected in life. Even if we look at the life of Jesus Christ, we will see that the scribes and Pharisees criticized His teaching and especially, His behavior, condemned Him, ridiculed Him, humiliated Him in front of other people, and finally sentenced Him unjustly to death and crucified Him.

By His suffering and death on the cross, Jesus Christ won a great victory over sin and the devil. He brought the greatest good - deliverance from the bondage of sin and the devil and gave people salvation. "But God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

Humility, patience, restraint, and forgiveness, do not show weakness or loss for us Christians, they show the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a victory over evil and sin. God's love overcomes, through us, the evil that is in the hearts or deeds of our neighbors, "...to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Cor. 4:7). "...I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me...for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:9-10), wrote the Apostle Paul.

Sometimes our powerlessness is best described in life's stories.

There lived a widow who had three sons. Although it was difficult for her to feed her children, she not only clothed and provided for them, but also taught them to love God. While the sons were with her, they lived in a divine way. But as time passed, the sons grew up, got married, and went on to live separately from their mother. Friends and society began to have a bad influence on her sons, and little by little they began to forget their mother, and then their mother's teaching about God's law. The mother's heart longed for her children, and every time they met, the mother reminded them, "Live with God!" The children would say, "Oh, mom, now everyone lives like that. We are adults and we know how to live." The old woman cried and prayed even more fervently for her sons.

Summers passed and the elderly mother died. After the funeral, her sons tidied up the house and found their mother's diary, where she recorded important events in her life. Among other things, the following words were written there, "I prayed for two hours every night for the conversion of my sons. Two years passed, God heard my prayer and my youngest son was converted. Five years passed, the prayer was heard and my second son was converted. Now I finish life is an unanswered prayer, my eldest son is not converted. But I sacrifice my whole life to God for his conversion. "God, save my son! " After reading this, the eldest son fell to his knees and said, "Forgive me, mother. God has heard your prayer, from now on I will live with God as you taught me." He wept and turned to God in silent prayer.

This story shows that maternal love has no limits. She defeats all evil even after death! "...we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure" (1 Cor. 4:12).

In today's parable, Jesus Christ reminds us that God's attitude toward us depends on our attitude toward everything around us.

Dear believers, let us always remember the words with which Jesus Christ concludes today's parable, "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart" (Mt. 18:35).

Congratulations to each of you, I wish you a blessed day!