

Ordinary Time- XXV Sunday [Year A]

Today's readings are all about our sense of justice and the extravagant grace of a merciful God. While God is both just and merciful, God's mercy often seems, in our view, to override His justice, as God pardons us unconditionally and rewards us generously by opening Heaven for the Gentiles and the Jews.

In the First Reading, prophet Isaiah reminds the exiles in Babylon that their God is more merciful than they are, and more forgiving. He is ready to pardon their infidelity to God, which has resulted in their exile. Their merciful God will bless them with material and spiritual blessings. Hence, Isaiah exhorts them, and us, to seek the Lord and to put aside evil ways that we may receive His mercy and forgiveness.

In the Second Reading, Paul offers himself as an example of total submission, aided by God's grace, to His will. Paul is ready to live continuing his mission, or to die and join the Lord, whichever is God's will.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us the strange parable of a landowner who hired laborers at five different times during the course of one day to work in his vineyard, but paid the same living wage for a full day's work to all of them. This story presents God (the landlord), Whose love and generosity to all of us demonstrates the difference between God's perspective and ours. God looks at us, sees our needs and meets those needs generously and mercifully. His provisions for our spiritual lives will never run out, and when we share our blessings with others, we tap into the inexhaustible Divine supply. The parable also shows the mercy, compassion, and generosity of a gracious and forgiving God in allowing the later-called Gentiles as well the first-called Jews, His Chosen People, to enjoy the same eternal bliss of His Heavenly Kingdom

Life messages: (1) We need to follow God's example and show loving generosity to our neighbor. When someone else is more successful than we are, let us assume that person needs it. When someone who does wrong fails to get caught, let us remember the many times we have done wrong

and gotten off free. Envy should have no place in our lives. We cannot control, and dare not pass judgment on, the way God blesses others, only rejoice that He does so, just as He blesses us.

(2) We need to express our gratitude to God in our daily lives. God personally calls each of us to our own ministry in this world and shows us His care by giving us His grace and eternal salvation. To God, we are more than just numbers on a payroll. Our call to His vineyard is a free gift from God for which we can never be sufficiently thankful. All our talents and blessings are freely given to us by God. Hence, we should express our gratitude to God by avoiding sins, by rendering loving service to others, by sharing our blessings with the needy, and by constant prayer, listening and talking to God at all times.