

Only One Thing to Fear

Twelfth Sunday of Ordinary Time – June 25, 2017- Matthew 10:26-33

Jesus makes the case this week to his disciples (and to us) that there is nothing to fear. There is no person or experience or situation in which he is not present with us. In fact, he says “Fear no one.” However, a bit farther in this same gospel account he goes on to say, “And to not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.” Jesus is saying that there is only one thing to fear. What do you suppose that might be?

Gehenna was known as the place on the outskirts of the city where garbage, refuse and fire existed. It was basically the city dump. Spontaneous fires erupted. It was not a place a person would want to go because it was full of rot, debris and corruption. It may have been a place of human sacrifice. Its reputation was of evil. Hence, it was a very visual concept for the understanding of hell, eternal punishment for a life of sin.

Jesus is telling the twelve this week that the work of the gospel will not be easy. It's not easy for us in today's world either. There will be persecution. There may even be death. If we are to be true to the Mission of Christ there will be struggle and certain sacrifice. However, Jesus reminds them (and us) that we are never out of the presence of God. “Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid, you are worth more than many sparrows.” In other words, God knows us in an intimate, deep and lasting way. We have a responsibility to continue to know God better.

The only thing to fear is the seduction from darkness and evil. Our work is to be in the light and proclaim to the world that Jesus is Lord and Savior. To that end, Jesus ensures our acknowledgment from the Father, our eternal home in heaven.

Blessings!


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