

Becoming Disciples of the Word

Sunday's

READINGS

Ezekiel 17:22–24
2 Corinthians 5:6–10
Mark 4:26–34

Scan the code to read today's readings. ➔



Opening PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, in living your Father's will, you made present the Kingdom. Make my first thought each day the desire to live your will in my thoughts and actions. Amen.



Thoughts for REFLECTION

How would your life change if you were aware each day that Heaven is your true home?

How do Saint Paul's words invite you to think about death?

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What You NEED to KNOW

Scripture Background

Ezekiel 17:22–24

We recall that Ezekiel was a prophet during the Babylonian Exile. The passage we read today follows a symbolic description of historical events in 597 B.C. King Nebuchadnezzar removed Joachim, king of Israel, and replaced him with his uncle Zedekiah, who had pledged loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah betrayed him and made an alliance with the Pharaoh of Egypt. He in turn was betrayed by Pharaoh. If this sounds like a made-for-TV mini-series, there's good reason for that. Drama abounds in Scripture. The conclusion of each episode in God's Word is this: he will lift up the lowly and bring justice to the mighty. God alone has the power to do so.

2 Corinthians 5:6–10

It may be difficult to enter the mind and heart of Paul. He has moved into communion with God so deeply that he considers his physical body a barrier to being completely one with God. Hear these words again. "Therefore, we aspire to please him whether we are at home or away" (v. 9). By saying "home," Paul is speaking of Heaven. He is telling us that

now we are away from home. God desires that we will return home. That, however, is our choice. In this world, have we been intentional about our journey to holiness? Have we done what we were asked to do? Recall, we are asked to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength ... [and] love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30–31).

Mark 4:26–34

This is probably not the first time you have heard a Gospel about a mustard seed. However, the first parable Jesus tells in this passage is only in Mark's Gospel. It leads us to an understanding that no matter what the sower does, ultimately, God is the grower. As in the First Reading, the emphasis here is on the power of God. The mustard plant/tree (both exist) is a symbol for the Kingdom of God. We pray for the coming of God's reign in its fullness when we say, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done." Perhaps we could also pray, "your kingdom comes when your will is done." When we cooperate with God's will, his Kingdom is realized, it is made real in this world.





Points to Ponder

A Call to Stewardship

When we hear the words from Ezekiel, “I am the Lord. / I bring low the high tree, / lift high the lowly tree” (17:24), we cannot help but hear the words of Mary to the angel “He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty” (Luke 1:46–55). Scripture continually emphasizes God’s connection to the lowly. Jesus attends to those who we might call the remnant of society, people who live on the edge of acceptance, of food insecurity, of homelessness, and with illness. We, too, must see and be present to them. Just like Jesus, we must use our hands and hearts to respond to their needs. Prayer can provide comfort, but food fills hungry stomachs. Stewardship calls us to examine our lives through the eyes of Christ.

- If your journey to Heaven is crowded with the lowly, how far would you be able to travel?



Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I would like to be filled with love for You; keep me closely united with You, may my heart be near to Yours.
—Pope Saint John XXIII

Strengthen belief in the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Visit the Pflaum Eucharist resources page.



and CHURCH TEACHING

Connecting GOSPEL

Does God Have Favorites?

Catholic teaching concerned with justice and peace is rooted in the life of Christ and his teaching. We see many examples of Jesus ministering to the poor, the sinners, and the sick. The words of Jesus, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me” (Matthew 25:45). This teaching is sometimes called the preferential option for the poor. It does not mean that God has a preference of the poor over those who are not. God

loves each of us completely. Rather, Jesus’ words call us to put those in need first in our lives. Pope Francis, quoting Pope Saint John Paul II, tells us, “This is a key criterion of Christian authenticity. Some mistakenly think that this preferential love for the poor is a task for the few, but in reality it is the mission of the Church as a whole” (cf. St. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 42).

➔ To learn more, refer to CCC, 541–553, or go to Booklet 6, Session 2 in Growing Faith.



Closing PRAYER

Change my heart, O God, to see those who live on the edges today. Move me to action to care for those who cry out for justice. Amen.

FAMILY CORNER

Scan here for parent resources. ➔



Question of the Week

What actions start small but can grow into larger things, whether good or bad?



Family Prayer

Jesus, help us to grow in faith, love, a positive attitude, and kindness. Amen.