

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 26, 2025

The God of Justice.

God, be merciful to me.

I have kept the faith.

-rvb.

Reading 1

Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18

**The LORD is a God of justice,
who knows no favorites.**

Though not unduly partial toward the weak,
yet he hears the cry of the oppressed.

The Lord is not deaf to the wail of the orphan,
nor to the widow when she pours out her complaint.

**The one who serves God willingly is heard;
his petition reaches the heavens.**

The prayer of the lowly pierces the clouds;
it does not rest till it reaches its goal,
nor will it withdraw till the Most High responds,
judges justly and affirms the right,
and the Lord will not delay.

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

A story is told about a student who asked a Sufi teacher, “I have heard that the way of the West is communion with God, and the way of the East is union with God. Can you explain which way is higher or better?” “My friend,” the Sufi replied, “When there are two airplanes in

the air, one at twenty thousand feet, and the other at forty thousand feet, and you are on the ground, what difference does it make to you which one is higher?”

Sirach does not debate whether prayer is higher or better, rather is prayer more effective. For Sirach prayer is obedience to the Lord which will guarantee God’s mercy and justice for his people, “**The one who serves God willingly is heard; his petition reaches the heavens.**” In the fuller context of Sirach 35:11-24 the author repeats the traditional teachings of both the law and the prophets regarding the care, respect, and concern for the marginalized (physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and/or spiritually bankrupt). God is a just judge, acting on behalf of Israel’s weak and oppressed. The righteous will survive, be heard, and be blessed.

Sirach prays that the Lord will act with strength to bring the foreign nations to the awareness that only the Lord is God. The context for this perspective of Sirach is the fact that the Israelites in Palestine are still under the domination of foreigners, the Greeks. Thus, Sirach prays for his people to be released from bondage, just as He once freed them from the clutches of Pharaoh in Egypt.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 34:2-3, 17-18, 19, 23

R. (7a) The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.

Let my soul glory in the LORD;
the lowly will hear me and be glad.

R. The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

The LORD confronts the evildoers,
to destroy remembrance of them from the earth.

When the just cry out, the LORD hears them,
and from all their distress he rescues them.

R. The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted;
and those who are crushed in spirit he saves.

The LORD redeems the lives of his servants;
no one incurs guilt who takes refuge in him.

R. The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

Reading 2

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

Beloved:

I am already being poured out like a libation,
and the time of my departure is at hand.

**I have competed well; I have finished the race;
I have kept the faith.**

From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me,
which the Lord, the just judge,
will award to me on that day, and not only to me,
but to all who have longed for his appearance.

**At my first defense no one appeared on my behalf,
but everyone deserted me.**

May it not be held against them!

But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength,
so that through me the proclamation might be completed
and all the Gentiles might hear it.

And I was rescued from the lion's mouth.

The Lord will rescue me from every evil threat

and will bring me safe to his heavenly kingdom.

To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

This reading from 2 Timothy is Paul's final words which flow from the depth of his spiritual life. It is a prayer which gives evidence that now he stands before God in utter simplicity, humility, and helplessness. He has let go of his long, dedicated, and faithful ministry. He will be rewarded for his years of tears, trials, and toil. Paul's sacrificial death serves as an incentive to all ministers of the Word. Paul exhibits humility in his attitude towards what others have done for him. Humility's "right ordering" like humility's balance, must do first with oneself. A humility that begins with the acceptance of self as imperfect will not be interested in judging others. To be humble is not to make comparisons. He has achieved his crown of glory. All but God has abandoned him. Rabbi Heschel says of prayer: "Prayer is an invitation to God to intervene in our lives, to let His will prevail in our affairs, it is the opening of a window to Him in our will, an effort to make Him the Lord of our soul."

Paul exhibits humility in his attitude towards what others have done for him. What are other qualities of those who are perceived to be humble?

1. They are not boastful.

A humble person does not flaunt their wealth, status, accomplishments, or anything else they may have.

They are modest and often embarrassed by praise. Instead of being proud of themselves, a humble person will be happy for others who deserve the credit.

2. They are grateful for everything in life.

Humble people recognize how lucky they are each day and are thankful for what they have. They are grateful for the people in their lives and the opportunities that have been given to them.

3. They do not belittle others.

Humility is the ability to see others as equals. To be humble, one must never belittle or make fun of another person in any way.

4. They are not jealous.

Jealousy is a sign of insecurity, but also the need to be better than other people. Humble people do not feel this way and instead respect others for their work.

5. They are not proud.

Pride is the worst of all evil because it comes from a place of arrogance. Humble people have no reason to be prideful and thus do not feel this way.

They also realize that they should never take credit for anything that was done by someone else or something outside their control.

6. They are not rude.

Rudeness is a common trait among people who have no sense of manners. Humility allows a person to be courteous and kind, even in the most trying circumstances.

7. They are not vain.

Vanity is characterized by excessive self-love or admiration of one's own appearance. A humble person does not care about their looks and instead focuses on being a good person.

8. They are not materialistic.

Materialism is an obsession with physical objects. A humble person does not see as more worthy than others because of their monetary value but instead sees beauty in everything around them.

They know that happiness cannot be bought and thus do not spend on themselves that they could use to help others.

9. They are not jealous of others.

They are not jealous of others' success and instead applauds other people's accomplishments as they would their own.

They also never put down those around them for doing good work because they know very well what it feels like to struggle.

-Internet.

Alleluia

[2 Corinthians 5:19](#)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

**God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ,
and entrusting to us the message of salvation.**

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 18:9-14

Jesus addressed this parable
to those who were convinced of their own righteousness
and despised everyone else.

"Two people went up to the temple area to pray;
one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector.

The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself,

**'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity --
greedy, dishonest, adulterous -- or even like this tax collector.**

I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.'

But the tax collector stood off at a distance
and would not even raise his eyes to heaven
but beat his breast and prayed,

'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.'

I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former;

for whoever exalts himself will be humbled,
and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

In the Gospel of Luke, we are called to be honest with ourselves, and if we are, we will become humble in our attitude, disposition, and behavior as in the case of the tax collector, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." An Hasidic story is told about three youths who hid themselves on the Sabbath in a bar to smoke and drink. They were discovered by Rabbi Hasidim who wished to flog the offenders of the Sabbath. One youth exclaimed: "I deserve no punishment for I forgot today is the Sabbath." The second youth

said, “I forgot that smoking on the Sabbath is forbidden.” The third youth exclaimed: “I, too forgot.” “What did you forget?” responded the Rabbi. In all honesty and humility, he replied, “I forgot to lock the door.”

How do we attain this understanding, this deep honesty concerning ourselves and our failures and weaknesses? Pay attention to yourself. The emphasis is on self-knowledge, knowing oneself and honestly accepting and owning one’s own imperfections like that of the tax-collector in contrast to the Pharisee. The central themes of honesty, humility, and prayer pervade many of the spiritual writers. Ben Wilson, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous had the same insight: “AA is a terribly imperfect society because it is made up of very imperfect human beings. We are dedicated to an ideal of which, because we are very sick and dis-eased, we often fall short. I know because I constantly fall short myself.” The tax-collector cut through to the core of his being via honesty and humbly aware of his limitations. The philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson observed: “There is a crack in everything God has made, and not least of all in each one of us.”

Finally, there is a stark contrast in prayer styles between the Pharisee and the tax collector. The tax collector's is one of the heart, perceiving himself as poor, a sinner, naked, blind, and worthless. His prayerfulness saturated his heart with humility and honesty. His prayer will become more identified with the rhythm of his heart and will eventually become unceasing. On the other hand, the prayer of the Pharisee remains on his lips, his head does not sink into his heart. He does not pray but brags about himself, to himself, and with himself. His words are bombastic, bounding off the sacred marble walls, while his heart is empty. He is not a pray-er, but a brag-ger.

Final Prayer: God of love, hear the prayer of your faithful people. Be merciful to us who are sinners as we gather during the Eucharist to pray, "Lord, have mercy on us." May our prayers rise like incense in your sight. Amen.