

Trinity 8

(There are three choices of propers for each office this week) A Homily is provided for Morning Prayer A, and one for Evening Prayer A . Others are to be written.

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Ecclesiasticus 1:18-27

Second Lesson: John 7:14-24

Homily

Where does wisdom come from?

What is wisdom?

What result does it have?

The first lesson, from Ecclesiasticus discusses just these questions, and Jesus, as reported by John applies it to Himself, and thus to us, His chosen people.

Does wisdom come from our native ability?

Does it come from studying a lot?

Is it something that comes with age?

Well, all of those things help.

All of those things are things to be wise about.

They provide the tools for making wise decisions,

but none of them are wisdom,
as Ecclesiasticus says,

"The root of wisdom is to fear the Lord, ..."

Does that mean to be afraid of Him?

Well, not really, but ...

Well, maybe you remember the Narnia series.

The children had just found out that the great Aslan, whom they were going to meet, was a lion.

"Is he safe?" they asked.

"Who said anything about safe?"

answered Mr. Beaver, "He's a lion, I tell you.

He's not safe at all, but he's good"

The fear of the Lord starts with awe,
the realization of His greatness and majesty,
and shortly passes to an uncomfortable realization
that we are not worthy to meet Him,
and our knees should shake.

But He is good and we can trust Him,
and He demands that of us.

The fear of the Lord is a big concept
and includes all that.

And that is where wisdom starts.

Let's continue:

"The fear of the Lord driveth away sins: "

If we understand what it is to be in His presence,
 we're going to want to please him,
 both because it's dangerous not to,
 and (more importantly)
 because we want to, because He is good.

*"and where it is present, it turneth away wrath.
 A furious man cannot be justified;
 for the sway of his fury shall be his destruction."*

Please, be careful of "righteous indignation".
 When anger takes over, even for a good reason,
 self-centeredness is the result,
 and the walls we build against others
 are also walls against God.
 And, if righteous anger is so dangerous,
 well, what of wrongful anger?

*"A patient man will tear [weep] for a time,
 and afterward joy shall spring up unto him. "*

Patient endurance of a wrong
 sometimes has a favorable result,
 but even if it doesn't,
 there is the joy of knowing the approval of God.

"For the fear of the Lord

*is wisdom and instruction:
 and faith and meekness are his delight. "*

Which brings us to the Gospel reading:
 wisdom, as demonstrated by Our Lord,
 is not found in our own abilities,
 nor in all the things we have learned,
 but in God:

*"Now about the midst of the feast
 Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.
 And the Jews marvelled, saying,
 How knoweth this man letters,
 having never learned?
 Jesus answered them, and said,
 My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.
 If any man will do his will,
 he shall know of the doctrine,
 whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.
 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory:
 but he that seeketh his glory that sent him,
 the same is true,
 and no unrighteousness is in him."*

Which brings us back to where we started.
 There's a verse in Proverbs that says,
"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."
 Moreover, the objective of wisdom

is the presence of God and union with Him.
There is really no other goal that matters.

let us pray.

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, who knowest our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking; We beseech thee to have compassion upon our infirmities; and those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask, vouchsafe to give us, for the worthiness of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Zech 4:1-10

Second Lesson: Gal 3:24-4:7

Homily to be written

Trinity 8

Morning Prayer C

First Lesson: Gen 24:1-27

Second Lesson: Eph 5:22-33

Homily to be written

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Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Ecclesiasticus 6:22-end

Second Lesson: Luke 10:38-42

Homily

We heard a gospel reading that runs counter to a good part of what we've all been taught. We've been brought up to respect the work ethic, the idea that hard work, ambition, attending to business. and lots of activity, is morally required of us, and that lack of this kind of busy-ness is a moral failing known as laziness. We tend to judge people (and ourselves) by what they (or we) have accomplished. We ask, "What's it good for?" "What's the bottom line?" "What result do you expect?" And we judge success on whether those results are achieved. The whole idea seems to make good sense. It certainly is practical. It lies at the heart of our modern economy, and most of what we have and enjoy

would not exist without hard work. It's easy to build a strong Scriptural case in favor of such an attitude.

One finds the rewards of hard work and the costs of slothfulness well illustrated throughout the Bible. Jesus Himself filled his parables with stories of successful business men, and then there's the woman in the last chapter of Proverbs (check it out if you don't know her), incredibly busy and incredibly admirable.

Martha was, without a doubt, following her. She was busy doing good things, things that had to be done, things any good hostess would do. Meanwhile her sister was sitting with the guests, not helping her one little bit. Martha was a bit peeved, Wouldn't you have been? Jesus, as He did so very often, took a different view, one at odds with what good people thought. He looked at Martha and saw this:

Doing, doing, doing,
never ceasing, never resting,

never gazing, never dreaming,
 never thinking thoughts worth thinking,
 busy, busy, running, running.
 always active, dead inside,
 so dead, so dead.

He saw a woman so caught up in the needful
 that she was missing the reason for it all,
 so busy entertaining the Messiah
 that she was ignoring what he had for her,
 doing good things, but untouched by His grace.
 What would he say to Martha?
 Maybe something like this:

Do less doing,
 run less running,
 dream some dreams, my friend,
 dream some dreams,
 and think some thoughts,
 and live.

Mary chose the better part, He said,
 and what is that better part?

We heard some heavy thoughts in Ecclesiasticus.

*“... wisdom ... is not manifest unto many.
 ... put thy feet into her fetters,*

*and thy neck into her chain.
 Bow down thy shoulder, and bear her,
 and be not grieved with her bonds.
 Come unto her with thy whole heart,
 and keep her ways with all thy power.
 Search, and seek,
 and she shall be made known unto thee:
 and when thou hast got hold of her,
 let her not go.”*

This mysterious writer, the son of Sirach,
 called Jesus (or Joshua),
 even though his book is in the Apocrypha,
 certainly knew something profound,
 and expressed it with passion.
 Yes, that's the word, passion.

Is sounds like a pretty intense romance
 being discussed here,
 a really strong desire,
 strong enough to willingly accept bondage.
 We're not talking about a quick fling,
 a casual acquaintance,
 or a one-night stand,
 but a commitment
 “Search, seek, and when you have hold of her,
 don't let go.”
 “Till death us do part ...”

Doesn't this sound like marriage?

And what is it he wants so passionately?

Wisdom

And what is wisdom?

Not just knowledge.

You can know an awful lot of facts,
and still act like an idiot.

Facts can be learned quickly,
but learning how to use them right cannot.

Wisdom begins with facts,
but it requires time, lots of time.

It requires thought, lots of thought.

And, yes, it requires imagination,
the ability to envision where the facts may lead.

A fact can be picked up quickly and held,
but wisdom must be nurtured,
one must grow into it,
it required time,
time that is not spent doing other things.

Martha

was doing all the things she knew how to do,
and she was doing them well.

She would do them well the next time
and the time after that,
and the time after that.

She had knowledge and the will to put it to work,

and all that was good indeed.

But she wasn't growing.

She wasn't hungering to be more than she was.

It was a good place she was stuck in,
but she was stuck.

Mary could have been helping her sister.

That would have been a good thing,
but she wouldn't have been able to grow.

Mary hungered.

She wanted to grow.

She found wisdom in the person of Jesus,
and that's what she sought.

Listen again to the son of Sirach:

*"... if thou wilt, thou shalt be taught:
and if thou wilt apply thy mind,
thou shalt be prudent.*

*If thou love to hear,
thou shalt receive understanding:
and if thou bow thine ear, thou shalt be wise,
Stand in the multitude of the elders;
and cleave unto him that is wise. "*

Mary did that.

So can we.

It's our calling, to sit at the feet of Jesus,
to learn wisdom in his presence,
to grow up, as St. Paul said,
"Into the stature of the fullness of Christ."
Nothing less will do,
and it takes time:

Do less doing,
run less running,
dream some dreams, my friend,
dream some dreams,
and think some thoughts,
and live.

Let us pray.

Day by day,
Dear Lord, of thee three things I pray:
To see thee more clearly,
Love thee more dearly,
Follow thee more nearly,
Day by Day
Amen.

Trinity 8

Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: Prov 11:24-31

Second Lesson: Matt 7:15-21

Homily to be written

Trinity 8

Evening Prayer C

First Lesson: 1 Sam 26:1-7, 12-17, 21-25

Second Lesson: Acts 12:1-17

Homily to be written