

May 10 - Saturday

*On the last day of the festival, the great day,
while Jesus was standing there, he cried out,
"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me,
and let the one who believes in me drink.
As the scripture has said,
'Out of the believer's heart
shall flow rivers of living water.'
Now he said this about the Spirit,
which believers in him were to receive;
for as yet there was no Spirit,
because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

John 7:37-39

The Spirit as “rivers of living water” flowing from the believers heart. The more familiar imagery used to describe the Spirit are wind and fire but how about the image of a fresh and cold water flowing on a river, living water that provides relief from thirst to any tired and weary traveler on a journey. Being thirsty is a universal experience. Many learn the lesson, some on a hard and difficult way, that a person can live for several days without food but not without water. People who go on fasting refrain from eating food but not without water. The Spirit is like water, rivers of living water that flows from a believer’s heart. What an image!

The U. S. government spent billions of dollars sending machines to the planet Mars to explore its surface looking for life, whether in the past or at present. And the clue is the presence of water – if there is water, there is life, same is true with us. There is life if the Spirit is in us. We have that expression “*naunsa man ka, wala man kay espiritu*” (what happen to you, you have no spirit” – it simply means you have no energy, no life at all. With the Spirit in us we do not simply exist but live a life.

We can also expand the implication of having that life through the living waters that flow from our heart. Like the river that gives its water freely, can we also share our water to those who are thirsty?

Keeping the waters to ourselves will make it stale and dead. The refreshing waters of the Jordan River flow into the area called the Dead Sea. It is referred to as dead because all the water it receives is kept and contain in the Dead Sea. “*Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.*” It speaks of life that is in us and it calls us to share this life that we found in Christ!

Prayer

*Water, Life, Spirit – you allow us O God
to experience you in various ways.
Allow us to share the water of life
with those who are on a journey
they who earnestly search and seek you
so that they too will find you. Amen.*

May 9 - Friday

*For in the one Spirit
we were all baptized into one body
-- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—
and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*

1 Corinthians 12:13

Two images come into play – being baptized and being made to drink – both involving water. To be baptized and to drink are two events that require from us our own consent. Baptism cannot be forced on someone. It implies willingness and free choice on the part of the one receiving. Paul’s imagery of drinking the Spirit is quite surprising, we hear of Spirit being poured out. In the same measure, drinking assumed that one takes it with agreement. Otherwise forcing someone to drink would be tantamount to the much detestable practice of water boarding, the torture of prisoners

which is an issue of contention between the government and those who uphold human rights.

What does it mean to be offered to drink of one Spirit? The language about God is really a challenge to all who speak about faith. Words are always inadequate and metaphors serve as one of the closest bridges to bring together our own human experience and that which we refer to as the realm of the Divine. But the idea of “drinking” the Spirit is a powerful one. It implies that God does not force us and in fact wants us to take it upon ourselves to make that decision whether to drink or not to drink. But it’s a standing offer for all. It is worthwhile to note that in the Gospel of John Jesus is referred to as the “living water” that quenches that deepest thirst. All those who make the decision to drink the water of life can experience life in all its fullness.

“We were all made to drink of one Spirit...” Here Paul speaks about the past. We already drank the Spirit. It means that the Spirit is already in us therefore we are now capable of living our lives in accordance with the Spirit. There is no excuse, in fact the Spirit that is in us speaks to us when our life is not in tune with God. *We were all made to drink of one Spirit...* is not just a statement of who we are. It is also a reminder of what we can be with God’s Spirit that is in us.

Prayer

*It’s awesome to know
that you now dwell in us, O God.
May we live audaciously
according to your Spirit that is in us. Amen.*

May 8 - Thursday

For just as the body is one

*and has many members,
and all the members of the body,
though many, are one body,
so it is with Christ.*

1 Corinthians 12:12

There is an on going controversial exhibit at South Street Seaport Exhibition Centre in Fulton Street called The Body. For \$25 one will go through 1 _ hour tour depicting real human bodies preserved by a process called “plastination.” Actually, the exhibit display not bodies but cadavers or corpses. Bodies are living organism not dead.

Paul uses the human body, our living body as a metaphor of who we are as a church. We are referred to as the living body of Christ. In this metaphor he focused on the “many parts, one body” dimension. This concept is not hard to understand because we all share the experience of having a body with different parts, each with distinctive functions. This is how it is in a local congregation wherever there is a community of faith that gathers for worship and service.

During the time of Paul the church was not as diverse as it is today in terms of the number of denominations. There were “divisions” mentioned but it was not as many as what we have. At times these “divisions” is a major cause of intense rivalry in many places and leads to ineffective witness to the world. Paul’s reminder rings in our heart, “*all the members of the body, though many, are one body.*” We are a living body that engages the world. We act and respond to human situations and needs. We are not a corpse for display we are the living body of Christ.

Prayer

*In the midst of our diversity
Keep us mindful O God
of our unity as a body. Amen.*

May 7 - Wednesday

*All these are activated
by one and the same Spirit,
who allots to each one individually
just as the Spirit chooses.*

1 Corinthians 12:11

Variety of gifts from the same Spirit, Paul then added another point – these gifts are given to each “as the Spirit chooses.” We have heard comments like, “I like music but music does not like me” from people who are asked to sing in the choir and politely decline the offer. And true indeed, there are some who cannot hit the note but who can do other things excellently. Some are crafted to be inspiring speakers, decisive leaders, others have the gift of meticulously organizing details and others are good in executing prepared plans. Each of us has a gift – as pointed in our reflection yesterday, all given for the “common good.” But Paul reminds us that each of us is chosen by the Spirit to have the gift that we now possess.

The idea of being chosen is a significant Biblical theme. From the Old Testament to the New, God chooses people for a purpose. God chooses Abraham and Sarah to be the father and mother of a nation that will be “a blessing to others.” (Gen 12:2). Of all the women in the world, God chooses Mary to be the mother of Jesus. Jesus himself said to his disciples, “*You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last...*” (John 15:16a). Gifts are gifts because it is given freely and it is the choice of the giver that makes the gift more valuable. God’s gifts are free so that we can also give these gifts in return not because we are compelled to do so but because we have the freedom to give it back. The Spirit has chosen to give each of us a gift, now the choice is ours whether we give it back to God.

Prayer

*Creator God, may we be generous
to make a gift out from the one
you have chosen to give to each of us. Amen.*

May 6 - Tuesday

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

1 Corinthians 12: 7-10

Paul's list of the gifts of the spirit gives us a glimpse of the kind of world that he lives. It was an exciting and definitely a contentious world. Imagine each one with a unique gift claiming its importance or at least pointing to others that without the gift he or she possesses, life in their community would not be complete. Visualize what each will say; How do you proceed to do the work without the guidance of my knowledge? How do you know that this particular work is really the need of the times? What if the workers will get sick, who will heal them? What will you do with workers who are tired, who will inspire them? These would be the few of the many voices waiting to be heard and claiming complete attention. Conflict, misunderstanding, jockeying for power and position would not be foreign in this environment, each one claiming "I am the best or have the most needed gift or without me all of you are useless". Paul presses on with his message that all these gifts are from the Spirit and it is given "*for the common good.*"

God's gifts are bestowed not for the personal glory of the one holding the gift. Gifts are given for the common good of the community of faith (the church) and of the wider world, which is the locus of God's mission. Today, we ask ourselves, what gift does God bestowed on me and am I using this gift "for the common good?" We can also ask it in a collective sense, what gift do we have as a congregation and are we using it for "the common good." Let us pray all of us will see the larger picture of God's purpose and design, larger than own lives, larger than our own local church, larger even than our own denomination. Indeed, all God's gifts and intended for common good!

Prayer

*Spirit of the living God,
You are the giver of gifts
Teach us to use our gifts
As you intend it to be. Amen*

May 5 - Monday

*"...and no one can say "Jesus is Lord"
except by the Holy Spirit.
Now there are varieties of gifts,
but the same Spirit;
and there are varieties of services,
but the same Lord;
and there are varieties of activities,
but it is the same God
who activates all of them in everyone.*

1 Corinthians 12:3b-6

The earth revolves around the sun and it is not the sun that revolves around the earth. This is the difference between the helio-centric (sun-centered) and the geo-centric (earth-centered) view of

the universe whose clash came into its prominence during the trial and sentencing of Galileo Galilei in 1633. There is a center where everything is grounded. Philosophers called this center as “the ground of all being.” Paul while preaching in Athens quoted Greek poet describing God as someone “in whom we live and move and have our being.” We call this center God – fully revealed to us in our Lord Jesus Christ whose power is manifested in the Holy Spirit. God is the center from whom everything revolves.

Paul reminds the church that there are varieties, not just one but many, gifts, services and activities but all of them comes and emanates from God whom we know and experience in the language of the Scripture as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The way Paul composed his thought is very powerful. When he speaks about gifts he reminds us that that capacity to do is not from us but from the Spirit. When he talks about service, he reminds us that we serve for the Lord. He points that all our activities are grounded in God, the one “*who activates all of them in everyone.*”

It is worth while to remember this truth that everything revolves around God. Whether we sing in the choir, we cook in the kitchen, we prepare the table for dinner, we preach at the pulpit, we welcome guests hospitably, we clean the trash, we keep our records or anything else, whether we are in the church or in the world – we offer whatever gift have that comes from the Spirit, we serve whatever we are called to do in the name of the Lord and we acknowledge that all of these come from God.

Everything revolves around God to whom everything comes and for whom we offer everything. The center is not the gifts, the services or the activities and definitely it is not us.

Prayer:

*Keep us on the right focus O God
in everything that we do
and on who we are. Amen.*

Comments

Dayday Lambert on May 5, 2008 1:13 PM

In anything we do, can I say that I am doing this for the Lord when I am doing something right, or I am happy to do it or this the best I can do? Taking the trash out can be for the Lord, but where is the connection there????

[Reply](#)

Pstr Bong on May 15, 2008 4:59 PM

I am thinking of those who clean up our trash after fellowship hour every Sunday in Church. I believe the task is part of our service to the Lord same as those who cook the food we share or lead the worship that day -- all these are part of the variety of services for God.

[Reply](#)