



# Come and See!

July 16, 2017

## The Word...

Thus says the LORD:

Just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down  
and do not return there till they have watered the earth,  
making it fertile and fruitful,  
giving seed to the one who sows and bread to the one who eats,  
so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth;  
my word shall not return to me void,  
but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it.  
*(from Is 55:10-11)*

You have visited the land and watered it; greatly have you enriched it....  
Softening it with showers, blessing its yield.  
*(from Ps 65)*

## Pondering the Word...

There are lovely images in today's Old Testament verses...of rain and fertility, growth and fruitfulness. As Christians, we assume God's "word" in Isaiah refers to Jesus. But perhaps we need to expand our interpretation to include ourselves in that as well.

Imagine God saying to you, "Just as the gifts I have given you, and joys and sorrows of your life, water and nourish your heart and soul, making them fertile, giving you seeds that feed others, so shall you return to me, having done my will and achieving the end for which I sent you. I will bless the fruits of your life."

## Living the Word...

Have you ever considered "the end" for which you have been sent by God? It's intimidating to think about--to imagine that God, in God's intimate knowledge of each of us, has a purpose for us as individuals, and sees the potential we each have inside. Yes, it's intimidating, especially IF we are relying on ourselves to figure it out on our own; IF we think we need to run out and start "doing" right away; IF we believe it is all up to us; IF we are so caught up in results that we fail to understand our role as the sowers, not the reapers.

Look at Jesus' life. He always relied on the Father for direction and guidance. He spent many years living a simple life, listening and discerning his call. He knew it was not him who acted, but the Father through him. And clearly, he left this earth having sown seeds. He—and we-- still await the fullness of the harvest.

The quest to find our purpose requires awareness, simplicity, and openness. We don't need advanced degrees or years of study or going to the ends of the earth to find it. God's will for us "is not too mysterious and remote." (Dt 30:11) But it does require us to put aside what we have planned in order for God to live through us. There are several readings this week that present the realities and the costs of discipleship. Spend some time in quiet prayer with this and the other readings. Ask God directly: "What is the end for which you have sent me?" Then listen. Just listen.

Personal Reflections and Ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Jul 17:** *"Whoever loves father or mother or son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."* (Mt 10:34-11:1)

Well at least Matthew isn't as harsh as Luke who tells us we must "hate" father, mother, son, and daughter! What Jesus is really telling us is to follow the first commandment: "You will have no other gods but God." In the past, we've discussed the idea of "holy indifference," a concept in Ignatian Spirituality. It isn't the attitude of "whatever" or not caring. It's the acceptance that, to be Christ's follower, no one, nothing can come before God and God's will for us. Reflect honestly on how you live. Who or what might you love more than God?

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**Jul 18:** *Jesus reproached the towns since they has not repented: "Woe to you! For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented in sackcloth and ashes."* (Mt 11:20-24)

The Greek word for repent has its roots in "metanoia," which means a lasting change in heart and mind. I scratch my head trying to figure out why the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum seem to take Jesus' miracles for granted. (Is it possible they've been instructed by the elders to ignore them?) But yet, have I allowed my life to be changed by the miracles of love and mercy Christ showers on me daily? Or do I take these gifts for granted? As is the case in much of the spiritual life, metanoia is not a one-and-done deal. Allowing God to change us takes constant awareness of both the miracles we experience and the sins and mistakes we make. How will you let God change your heart and mind...and change your life today?

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**Jul 19:** *"I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike"* (Mt 11:25-27)

When I read this passage, I have to wonder: Has God really hidden things from the wise and learned, or is it the wise and learned who have closed their minds and hearts and choose not to listen?

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**Jul 20:** *Moses said, "When I go to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' if they ask me, 'What is his name?' what am I to tell them?"* (Ex 3:13-20)

If we rely on Stephen's discourses in Acts, Moses is around 80 years old when he encounters the burning bush. It's been 40 years since he left Egypt, guilty of murder and scorned by his fellow Israelites. He's got a good life in Midian: a nice wife and father-in-law, two sons, flocks to tend. Why would he want to dig up all that old, painful stuff and go back to rescue his brethren who didn't trust him anyway? If only he had just ignored that darn bush! But he couldn't. And neither can we. Sometimes God asks us to do uncomfortable things: to forgive or ask forgiveness for a hurt long buried away; to help a friend or relative we'd just as soon forget; to do something we don't think we are capable of doing. Is there a call burning in your heart?

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**Jul 21:** *"How shall I make a return to the LORD for all the good he has done for me?"* (Ps 116)

*"...the invitation of this gentle, loving savior expects nothing difficult or extraordinary of you.*

*He is not making impossible demands on you, he only asks that your good intention be united to his so that he may lead, guide, and reward you....Indeed...God is only asking for your heart."*

*(Jean-Pierre De Caussade)*

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**Jul 22:** *On my bed at night I sought him whom my heart loves but I did not find him. I will rise and go about the city. The watchmen came upon me, as they made their rounds. "Have you seen him whom my heart loves?"* (Sgs 3:1-4)

In the Catholic tradition, it is the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, the Apostle to the Apostles. This reading from the Song of Songs describes the intimate love of a bride for her groom. In this passage, the bride takes a big risk, wandering the streets at night in search of her lover, unfazed by the presence of the night watchmen, heedless of the danger. It's not unlike the risk Mary takes in today's gospel, approaching Jesus' tomb while it is still dark, knowing it is guarded by Roman soldiers. Her love impels her to seek him. Being a disciple, having this kind of intimate love, does in fact require us to take some risks. Love always does. Does your heart burn for Christ? Are you willing to seek him, heedless of the costs?