



Daily Reflections

March 8, 2018

Scripture

Jeremiah 7: 23-28

Thus says the LORD:

This is what I commanded my people:

Listen to my voice;

then I will be your God and you shall be my people.

Walk in all the ways that I command you,

so that you may prosper.

But they obeyed not, nor did they pay heed.

They walked in the hardness of their evil hearts

and turned their backs, not their faces, to me.

From the day that your fathers left the land of Egypt even to this day,

I have sent you untiringly all my servants the prophets.

Yet they have not obeyed me nor paid heed;

they have stiffened their necks and done worse than their fathers.

When you speak all these words to them,

they will not listen to you either;

when you call to them, they will not answer you.

Say to them:

This is the nation that does not listen

to the voice of the LORD, its God,

or take correction.

Faithfulness has disappeared;

the word itself is banished from their speech.

Our Scripture Reflection

Oh my! What a scathing indictment God casts upon His people through Jeremiah the Prophet. What is their problem? The same problem initiated by Adam and Eve: the human attempt to play God. Or to put it in more contemporary terms, they lack humility. There is only one medicine for such a spiritual cancer: surrendering one's life completely to God in imitation of Jesus. May you receive the Grace to do so this Lenten day.

Food for your Journey

Throughout [the Confessions], which is written in the form of a prayer, Augustine freely admits his willful disobedience to God. Augustine's intent is to reveal the perversity of the human heart, but specifically that of his own. But Augustine was not intent on just confessing his sinfulness: This book is also the confession of his faith in Christ as well. Augustine, as he is moved from a state of carnality to one of redemption, marvels at the goodness of God.

One of the most telling incidents in the Confessions is Augustine's recollection of a decisive event in his youth. He and an assortment of friends knew of a pear tree not far from his house. Even though the pears on the tree didn't appeal to Augustine, he and his friends were intent on stealing the pears simply for the thrill of it. They had no need of the pears, and in fact ended up throwing them to some pigs. Augustine's account of this thievery reveals a penetrating insight into our dilemma as human beings. Whereas today many want to blame their parents or their environment for their problems, Augustine admits that his sole motive was a love of wickedness: He enjoyed his disobedience.

This reflects one of Augustine's major contributions to Christian theology: his emphasis on the perversity of the human will. We would all do well to read Augustine's Confessions if only to remind us that evil isn't simply a sickness but a condition of the heart that only Jesus Christ can heal.

—Tim Garrett, "St. Augustine," Probe Ministries Web Site, probe.org. Retrieved January 10, 2005.

A Prayer from the Heart

Holy God, Who resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble: grant us the virtue of true humility, where of Your Only-begotten son showed in Himself a pattern for Your faithful; that we may never by our pride provoke Your anger, but rather by our meekness receive the riches of Your grace.
Amen