



Daily Reflections

July 15, 2016

Scripture

Matthew 12:1-8

Jesus was going through a field of grain on the sabbath.
His disciples were hungry
and began to pick the heads of grain and eat them.
When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him,
"See, your disciples are doing what is unlawful to do on the sabbath."
He said to the them, "Have you not read what David did
when he and his companions were hungry,
how he went into the house of God and ate the bread of offering,
which neither he nor his companions
but only the priests could lawfully eat?
Or have you not read in the law that on the sabbath
the priests serving in the temple violate the sabbath
and are innocent?
I say to you, something greater than the temple is here.
If you knew what this meant, I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
you would not have condemned these innocent men.
For the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath."

Our Scripture Reflection

The old saying, "Sometimes you can't see the trees for the forest", describes well the hypocritical attitude of the religious leaders in today's Gospel text. Jesus and His men after doing His Father's work were exhausted and hungry. They feed themselves, pure and simple, but only to be accused of violating the law governing work on the Sabbath. Because they were so petty and spiritually blind, the religious leaders failed to realize:

1. Jesus, the Lord, trumped Sabbath observance
2. An act of merciful love trumped Sabbath observance

Yes, they couldn't see the trees for the forest. Remember: There is never a bad time for compassion.

Food for your Journey

Let's assume you are open to anything God would ask you to do. You would be willing to lead a Bible study or work on a construction project in Nigeria or (perish the thought) serve as recreation leader for some junior highers.

But what about the work of praying? Is that too much to ask? In terms of pure effort, praying doesn't seem all that difficult. Yet look back on this past week. You may have spent 2 hours preparing for a Sunday school lesson, or a couple of hours at a youth group outreach. But how much time did you spend in prayer? For some reason, it's really tough, isn't it?

This is not to say that we should be legalistic about prayer. One 16th-century pastor got so caught up in church responsibilities that he felt he was "falling behind" in his prayers. So he prayed for 3 days straight, going without food and sleep! It took him 5 days in bed to recover from that marathon (and it was probably a lot longer before he felt like praying again).

Somewhere between that "too much" attitude and our "too little" practice is the proper balance.

—"The hardest thing to do," Campus Journal, Gospelcom.net.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Each and every one of Your actions revealed the mercy of the Father. Fill me with Your Grace so that my actions may reveal His Presence as well. Amen.

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