

Reading 1: 2 Kgs 4: 8-11, 14-16

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 89: 2-3, 16-17, 18-19

Reading 2: Rom 6: 3-4, 8-11

Gospel

: Mt 10: 37-42

Scripture: Mathew 10: 37 - 42

He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it. "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. He who receives a prophet because he is a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward, and he who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

Meditation: God has put us first in his thought, care, and concern for our well-being and future. God loved us first and our love for him is a response to his exceeding kindness and mercy towards us. Even while we were hopelessly adrift through our own sinful pride, rebellion and unbelief, he choose to give us his own beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who laid down his life for our sake - to set us free from slavery to sin, Satan, and death.

Proof of God's unfailing love for us

There is no greater proof of God's love for us than the free-will offering of his Son who shed his blood for us on the cross. His death broke the curse of guilt and condemnation, and won for us pardon and adoption as beloved sons and daughters of God our Father. Through the victory of his cross and resurrection, the Lord Jesus offers us abundant new life through the gift and power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

The love of God comes first

The Holy Spirit reveals to us the love of the eternal Father and the eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who come to make their home with us and to unite us in a bond of peace and friendship. That is why the Lord Jesus commanded his disciples to give him their undivided loyalty and love above all else. We owe him a debt of gratitude for what he has done for us. The Lord Jesus gives us the assurance and promise that he will raise up our mortal bodies to be like his so that we may fully share in his resurrection for all eternity. God has no equal - that is why we owe the eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit our undivided loyalty, trust, and obedience. Jesus challenges his disciples to examine who they love first and foremost. A true disciple loves God above all else and is willing to forsake all for the Lord Jesus who calls us to follow him. Jesus insists that his disciples give him the loyalty which is due to God, a loyalty which is higher than spouse or kin. It is possible that family and friends can become our enemies, if the thought of them keeps us from doing what we know God wants us to do.

God's compelling love knows no rival

The love of God compels us to choose who or what will be first in our lives. To place any relationship or anything else above God is a form of idolatry. We can allow many different things to take control of our lives and possess us - such as greed and lust for power, possessions, and wealth. But only God's love can set us free to love as he loves - with mercy, kindness, goodness, patience, perseverance, and self-control. The first and great commandment is to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. If we pursue the love of God and put his kingdom first in our lives, then he will give us everything we need to sustain us now and in the future as well. Who is the Lord and Master of your life?

True love overflows in kindness and mercy towards others

True love for God compels us to express charity, merciful deeds of kindness and goodness towards our neighbours who are also loved by God because he created each of them in his image and likeness. Mother Theresa of Calcutta once told a marvellous story about a destitute family who had nothing to eat for days. When news of their impoverished condition came to the *Missionary Sisters of Charity*, Mother Theresa personally went to their home and brought them some food supplies. The mother of the family immediately divided the food in half and carried it off. When she returned, Mother Theresa asked her, "Where did you go?" She gave the simple answer, "To my neighbours, they are hungry also!" Mother Theresa said, "I was not surprised that she gave - poor people are really very generous. I was surprised that she knew they were hungry. As a rule, when we are suffering, we are so focused on ourselves; we have no time for others." Jesus declared that any kindness shown and any help given to the people of Christ will not lose its reward (Matthew). Jesus never refused to give to anyone in need who asked for his help. As his disciples we are called to be kind and generous as he is. Jesus sets before us the one goal in life that is worth any sacrifice and that goal is union with God - uniting our heart, mind, and will with his heart and will for our lives. The reward of a life given over to God and obeying his voice is God himself - the source of true peace and joy that lasts forever. Does the love of Jesus Christ compel you to put God first in all you do?

Questions for Community Faith Sharing

1. Who or what takes first place in your life - in your daily thoughts, cares, and concerns?
2. What can give us unshakeable hope and confidence in the face of failure, defeat and death?
3. What cripples the mind and heart and stifles the healing power of love?

"Lord, no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart has conceived the things you have prepared for those who love you. Set us ablaze with the fire of the Holy Spirit that we may love you in and above all things and so receive the rewards you have promised us through Christ our Lord."