

A man died and went to heaven. He was met at the Pearly Gates by St. Peter who led him down the golden streets. They passed stately homes and beautiful mansions until they came to the end of the street where they stopped in front of a rundown cabin. The man asked St. Peter why he got a hut when there were so many mansions he could live in. St. Peter replied, "I did the best with the money you sent us."

Dear friends,

The world we live is a mixture of good and bad. There is a good and there is bad in everything. Good and bad will be mixed until the end of the world. Good and evil will always be found together in persons and institutions. How we look at things matters in our lives.

In today's gospel Jesus explains the meaning of the parable of sower and weeds. The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which is small and when it is grown it has the capacity to have more people under him.

God respects people. He knows that temptation is often stronger than their good intentions and they need to find and to choose steadily what is good. God has given freedom to everyone. The parable of the sower clearly explains that God allows both till the end.

God respects human beings than anything else. God gave the authority to humans to subdue it. When we have freedom, there is a possibility of overdoing that.

Today's first reading is part of the second half of Wisdom reminding us of God's tolerance and merciful patience. God is forbearing because He loves all that He has made (11:17-12:8) and because He is the sovereign master of His great power (12:9-22). The Book of Wisdom, written a century before Christ in Alexandria by a pious Jew, shows us a merciful and patient God rather than the strict, angry and judgmental God presented in the book of Genesis.

God is so patient and merciful. We are answerable for our life. Look at us. We can see in ourselves both good and evil in our heart, our thoughts and our actions. St. Paul said in Galatians 5:16-17, "Therefore, I say to you, walk according to the spirit, and do not give way to the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the spirit, and the desires of the spirit are opposed to the flesh. Both are in conflict with each other, so that you cannot do everything you would like to. But let the spirit lead you." In another place where we see, St. Paul encourages us with what he had. God answered me, "My grace is enough for you, for my power is manifested fully in weakness." For when I am weak then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10)

Let us think about ourselves. How do we look at things and people around us? We try to judge people and find fault with others. Jesus never labeled anyone good or bad.

“Friends can become enemies, and enemies can become friends. Ego and pride can turn what is good into bad, and kind words can turn what is bad into something good.” “None of us are just black or white, or never wrong and always right. No one. No one exists without polarities. Everybody has good and bad forces working with them, against them and within them.”— **Suzy Kassem, Rise Up and Salute the Sun: The Writings of Suzy Kassem**

Aristotle: “Anybody can become angry, that is easy; but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose and in the right way that is not within everybody’s power and is not easy.”

Therefore, let us learn the following:

- 1). Accept the reality of good and bad and try to look at that in us.
- 2). Understand the mercy of God and make use of it.
- 3). Create a positive energy around you. Look at the good things in others. Try to show mercy to the weak. Don’t pass judgments, prejudices over the other.
- 4). Appreciate the good in others. Be kind to everyone.

A Bishop was sailing for Europe on one of the great transatlantic ocean liners. When he went on board, he found that another passenger was to share a cabin with him. After unpacking his bags, he went to the purser and inquired if he could leave his gold watch and other valuables in the ship’s safe. He explained that he had just met the man who was to occupy the other berth in his cabin and he was afraid that the man might not be trustworthy. The purser smiled, accepted the valuables and remarked, “It’s all right, Bishop, I’ll be very glad to take care of them for you. The other man has just been up here and left his valuables for the same reason!” Today’s Gospel reminds us that we should not judge others hastily. There is a lot of good in the worst of us and a lot of evil in the best of us. In other words, the best of us are still “weeds” in God’s garden.