

FAITH COMES BY HEARING Bible Study – 2.28.24 (for 3.3.24)

FIRST READING: Ecclesiastes 5:1-3

¹Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. ²Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before

God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore, let your words be few. ³For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.

- 1) Ecclesiastes is written for the purpose of helping others see what matters most in life when it can pass by so quickly. One of those pieces that matters is worship. Why do you think worship matters?
- 2) The way we treat what matters is different from that which doesn't. How does Solomon advise us to treat our worship? Why does he give this advice?
- 3) Solomon advises us to be considerate with our words. How has being considerate with your words helped your worship and relationship with God?

Second Reading: James 4:7-10

⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you

double-minded. ⁹Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

- 1) James wrote his letter to expose hypocritical practices within Jesus communities (which explains some of his stern language). With this community, quarreling, fights, and envy between each other was evident and affecting their witness. How are James' opening words in this passage revealing to this community?
- 2) One of the other major teachings of James' letter is that friendship with God is possible, and most important. How does James emphasize that theme in these words?
- 3) God responds to our humble approach. What does God give? Why does this matter?

GOSPEL: Mark 1:35-39

³⁵And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, ³⁷and they found him and said to him,

“Everyone is looking for you.” ³⁸And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” ³⁹And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

- 1) Prior to this moment, Jesus has had a busy evening healing and delivering people. Yet, what is Jesus’ practice?
- 2) Why is it important for us to see this practice of Jesus? What does this tell us?
- 3) Martin Luther once said, “I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.” How does Luther echo Jesus? Why is that time of prayer and silent worship with God so important in eliminating hurry from our lives?