

**Third Sunday of Pentecost, 25 2008 Year “A”**  
**Genesis 6:9-22; 7:24, 7:14-19, Psalm 46, Romans 1:16-17,3:22-31, Matthew 7:21-29**  
**Prepared by the Rev. Dr. Seamus P. Doyle**

*Not everyone who says to me “Lord, Lord” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father in heaven.”*

To understand this statement *only those who do the will of my Father in heaven will enter the Kingdom of heaven* we have to keep in mind what Jesus said about the Kingdom of God. First of all, depending on the translation, it can be read, *the kingdom of heaven is within you*, OR *the kingdom of heaven is within your grasp*. The implication here is that we do not have a palace in the sky called “the kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven is not some building or place in outer space.

Many people talk about, “When I get to heaven I will...” And we forget that the teaching of Jesus tells us that the kingdom of God is within us. It seems easier to believe there is a place out there, someplace in space, for which we have to do good works, say prayers, etc in order to gain admission. It is much more difficult to realize that the easier softer way of gaining admission to heaven is to live one day at a time by being compassionate, caring, forgiving, loving, helping those in need and those who cannot repay us for what we do for them.

The kingdom of God is within you. You are made in the image and likeness of God. These are not pious statements. These are spiritual realities that we do not think about often enough. What would happen to us if we stopped some morning by the mirror and looked into our own eyes and heard the voice of God say, *You are my beloved child with whom I am well pleased*’

To hear the word of God and act upon it is to be like the person who built their house upon a rock. For us Christians, the rock upon which we build our spiritual life is the life of Jesus who said loud and clearly *I came to do the will of the one who sent me.*

What was the will of God for Jesus? The morning after he cured Peter’s mother-in-law, the disciples found Jesus in the wilderness in prayer. They begged him to return as there were many others who had come to be cured. He replied, *I must preach the Good News in other towns also, because that is what God sent me to do*” He was not going to be known only as a miracle worker, others did that. He came to do one thing and that was to preach the Good News. The good News that he preached was that *the Kingdom of God is within you.* Jesus could not find words enough to describe the Kingdom of God so he talked about it in parables.

*The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.*

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. *The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.* In other words, the kingdom of God does not come in a blaze of glory. Rather it begins slowly and grows within us.

Jesus also was aware that the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of evil grow together in the same location. We have to make the choice about which kingdom in which we choose to live. He told this parable:

*The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'*

At all times there are consequences for our choices. Jesus made it clear in a different context that those who did the will of God would be rewarded. He said to the righteous: *Come you blessed of my Father for I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'* Then the righteous will answer him, *'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit*

*you?' And he replied: 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'*

A number of years ago Cancun, Mexico had no more than five hundred people. Then it became a tourist resort and with it came crime and the need for prisons. Cancun's local prison detains a hundred of the region's worst criminals who, at the end of the day, are in need of love. One afternoon a man decided to visit the prison as the result of meditating on the words of Jesus about visiting those in prison. He just wanted to assure them that no matter what crime they had committed, God still loved them. Reconciliation and hope could yet be found on the horizon. He asked a group of inmates, "How many of you have been insulted before?" Several raised their hands, "And how many of you have been shoved or spat upon?" And again, several of them raised their hands. Finally he asked, "And how many of you have been imprisoned?" This time all of them raised their hands. At this point the man replied Jesus was insulted, shoved, spat upon and imprisoned. Later on he gave each prisoner a letter from God addressed to them directly and they were invited to respond. One of the responses was as follows: *"Now I understand that you have brought me to this prison so that I would finally wake up to the reality that the REAL prison was my evil thoughts and the errors which I committed. "For this reason, Father, I ask for your forgiveness. I have cried because I have made you suffer and I don't want to hurt you anymore."*

How we understand the will of God for us and how we respond to that understanding will make a difference not only to ourselves but also to

those around us. How do I know what is the will of God for me today? Does God want me to go fishing or go to Church? Go fishing or go to work? Go fishing or fix the broken door that has been broken for four months? For each individual that answer will be different. Each person has to ask themselves what is the responsible thing for them to do. Perhaps they might even want to discuss it with another person. Fr Joe Martin tells people in AA that they have to take care of first things first and then second things first. In other words, at the beginning of recovery they need to attend AA until they understand the nature of their disease, then they need to be responsible to their family and find a balance between AA and family time.

Life is about finding a balance. God's will is about finding a balance in life. Jesus preached, healed, went to the synagogue weekly, attended weddings, dinners, was found in the mornings praying, and made time to take his disciples for Rest and Relaxation. The Kingdom of God is within us and to keep it alive is increase our conscious contact with God within us and to find the balance in life that gives us peace of mind and harmony with self, God and others. As Jesus said *Seek first the kingdom of God and all other things will be given to you.*