

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. John 4:23

In the Name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost +

To worship in spirit and truth is the goal of every faithful Christian. The question for us to ponder is what does it mean? Today in the Gospel we are traveling with Jesus to Jerusalem. We have just witnessed a series of remarkable events.

The Chapter begins with Jesus calling for Zacchaeus, a tax collector to come down from the tree he had climbed and then told him that He would eat dinner with him. This scandalizes the crowds. Here was this supposed prophet and teacher eating with a sinner. But Jesus does not look at the externals of the person, his life or profession, but into the heart. Jesus knows Zacchaeus to be faithful man.

In response to the crowd's anger and misunderstanding Jesus proclaims to them the parable of the wise and foolish servants. The servants who have used the talents given to them have made more and are rewarded; the one who hid his talent loses even that.

Then Jesus and the disciple prepare and enter Jerusalem. This is the triumphant enter into the city that we celebrate on Palm Sunday. In the midst of the celebration of His entry into the city comes the Gospel reading for today. Jesus weeping over Jerusalem and then upon entering the city going to the temple to throw out the money changers and those who sold animal for sacrifice.

The connection between these seeming unrelated events gives us insight into the passage from the Gospel of John that I read to begin this Homily. Jesus is teaching about how we are to worship the Father and the answer is in spirit and truth. In this the 19th Chapter of Luke we have concrete examples of what He is teaching us.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector and probably the son of a tax collector. Much like the caste system of many countries, those whose parent had unacceptable occupations were limited to the same occupations. Tax collectors were reviled because they were for the most part men who preyed on their own people collecting more than was due. Zacchaeus was a fair and faithful man we come to understand who did not steal or defraud the people.

When the people of the town looked at Zacchaeus they saw a short man with an unfortunate occupation. Jesus looked at Zacchaeus and He saw the spirit of the man and that spirit was seeking to do the Will of God.

The Will of God is that we use what talents He has given to us and to make use of the Created Order. We are not to misuse or to refuse to use the gifts that we have been given. This is the message of the wise and foolish servants. The wise servants know in truth the source of what they have been given. They fulfill the Will of God and return to Him the bounty they have reaped. The foolish servant is paralyzed by fear, because he knows neither the truth of God Word nor the Will of the Master.

These events set the stage for the triumphant enter into Jerusalem. Jesus the Son of David and Son of God is entering into the Royal City to claim His Kingship. What is expected is an earthly Kingship, but what He claimed is the Truth of God and the Will of the Father.

The Truth of God is that His people are to worship Him with hearts that are open and hands that are clean. Their worship is to be a desire to conform their human wills to the

Will of God so that they may go forth into the works to proclaim the Truth and carry in their hearts the knowledge and confidence that comes from doing the Will of God.

Jesus first weeps over the confusion and disorder of the Holy City. So far have they traveled from the Will of God, the Religious Leaders have so confused the people over what is the Truth of God and His will for His people.

In Righteous Anger, Jesus enters the Temple and throws out the money changers and those who sold. Not because they were not attempting to follow the precepts of the Law, but because they were profiting from the worship of God.

Profiting from the worship of God? But are not all these sacrifices and offering of money, incense and animals required by the Bible? Yes, but the sacrifice of animals, grain or incense are the externals, what we see, what others see. The sacrifice that God wishes, that God requires is a humble and contrite heart.

Listen again to the passage from John and then from Psalm 51:15-17

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him.

15 *O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.*

16 *For thou hast no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, thou wouldst not be pleased.*

17 *The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

It was to a proud and stiff necked people that Jesus came when He entered Jerusalem. More concerned about the external practice of religion than real conversion of spirit and will. Those He threw out of the Temple that day were not the greatest sinners; they were just making a living and getting by.

They had confused the Truth of their faith with the human rules of religion and not allowed their spirits to be broken so that with broken and contrite hearts they could worship the living God in Spirit and in Truth.

When we find ourselves too concerned with the external, the superficial nature of our faith, we need to pause, remember what we know to be the Truth and pray that our spirits, our wills may be in accord with the Divine Will of God. Then we can offer our prayer of praise and thanksgiving and worship in spirit and truth.

AMEN