

Thought for the Day

Wednesday December 18, 2024

Today's Scripture:

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'See, I have come to do your will, O God' (in the scroll of the book it is written of me)." When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ~ Hebrews 10: 5-10

Thoughts on Today's Verse(s):

Our focus for the 4th Sunday of Advent is upon Mary, The Virgin Mother of Jesus. We read and reflect upon her and what she was all about, chosen by God to bring His Son, The Messiah, into the world. With that in mind, we may wonder why the Lectionary readings for this week include today's passage from Hebrews. "*It doesn't make any sense*", one might be stirred to exclaim. Sorry.

Yes. It does make a lot of sense to consider our Lord Jesus' attitude and commitment to God through the writing of The Letter to the Hebrews because it also reflects the character of Mary.

Ever wonder why God chose Mary, a simple and humble Jewish girl, to be the earthly Mother of His Son? God trusted this young woman to care for His Son in a way that likely nobody else could have. Why? There could be a number of reasons, all of which add up to God's Will for her life. I would like you/us to consider the *single most important reason* today, offered us in today's scripture. Mary was willing to yield, submit, acquiesce, surrender to *God's will* for her life.

As in the Letter to the Hebrews, Mary was very much like The One to Whom she would give birth: *Jesus The Holy Son of God*. The "He" to Whom the author is referring today is Jesus. He is The One who repeatedly told God that He would do God's will, even though He knew it wasn't going to be pretty; He knew it was going to be painful, humiliating and awful. Most famously, He cried out in the Garden of Gethsemane, "**My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done**" (Matthew 27:42).

Think about it. Perhaps she was too young to understand what she was in for but after Gabriel's visit to Mary revealing what God has chosen her for, she had to have considered at least some of what was coming. Maybe; maybe not. No matter what she must've given some thought to the fact that she would become "with child" and be shunned for it. She had to know that poor Joseph, her betrothed and a Godly man, would be heartbroken and she had to no way of knowing how he would react - and he did respond predictably. Yet, Mary was committed to following God's will - *no matter the cost* - and not her own will. Are we as faithful? The Christian walk is not always a fun one. It is full of rocky roads and disappointments, challenges and difficult moments, when we too will be criticized and shunned. Sometimes it seems that we are suffering for no good reason. That's where our reflections upon The Lord and His Mother Mary can help. If we realize and believe that we too are called to obey God's will in a dark world that does not know Him, and thus doesn't care, we can find peace in the same knowledge that a young girl named Mary did - the peace of following God's will. That's why God chose her; that's why He chose you and me.

Prayer:

God The Father, Heavenly King, thank You for the perfection of Your plan to save us all from sin and death. Thank You for giving up Your Son Jesus as the only way You could bring us to Your kingdom thorough forgiveness, redemption and righteous propitiation. Father, it is clear that Your plan involves us as active participants and the complete commitment and surrender of Your servants is required. Such was the case with Jesus, such was the case with Mary and such is the case with us. Help us to trust in Your good, pleasing and perfect will so fully, completely & deeply that we may accomplish what You want and not what we would like. Our road with You is sometimes challenging and difficult yet we trust that You have a marvelous and perfect plan that includes us. May our commitment to Your plan, Your will for our lives be as righteous as a young Jewish girl who found joy and peace in Your challenging plan for her life. Thank You for calling us to Your plan. We pray through The One Who came to do Your will, Amen.