

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Book of Proverbs (*Proverbs 3:5-6*)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Lord Save Me From Myself

Effects of the Original Sin. When our first parents Adam and Eve disobeyed God and committed the first sin, they changed totally everything in every respect. Not only were they banished from the Garden of Eden but the single event changed the spiritual landscape of all humanity until the fulfillment of the coming of the promised Saviour, Jesus Christ. When Adam and Eve took the step to move away from God in disobedience, they put themselves out of touch with God's love that motivates their character and actions. As a result, fear sets in and they hid themselves from God. Though they must know that God still loved them, they were weakened by their sin and chose to act on their feelings rather than on what they know. Through their sin, humanity was weakened to its core. Falling into deeper temptation and with trust in God undermined, in self-defence the weakened soul now turns its focus on itself away from God starting all the miseries and sufferings of this world.

Self Serving. In the weakened soul not open to Christ's redeeming graces, the mindset is that of Satan, the Enemy of our Salvation: I will not serve God. The serving of self becomes the objective of human existence. This falsehood is justified and promoted by rationalism, humanism, and other human ideologies such as communism and false religions that put the human being at the centre of the universe. To this the Lord says: *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me."* (*Deuteronomy 5:6-7*). How much of our lives do we live pleasing ourselves, working at our own agenda instead of pleasing and serving God? How many false gods do we have in our lives that we place in greater importance than our relationship with God?

Self Sufficiency. The Lord says, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing."* (*John 15:5*). In our human logical thinking we often forget that our very breath is sustained by God. In forgetting about the power of God and in putting too much trust in ourselves we think we understand our own situation better and it is better to rely on ourselves than seeking God's help. Consequently, we put ourselves outside the grace of God and live unfulfilled lives that are mediocre at best and disastrous at worst. Without God in the centre of our lives, our happiness and peace is of the earthly kind. They will evaporate like foam in the sun once trouble looms in the horizon.

Self Advancement / Self Interest. Cutting oneself from God's love by denying or ignoring Him in our lives opens the way to destruction through the path of self-advancement/self-interest. Without the motivating pure love of God, the insecure self exalts itself over the others in an attempt to live in a secular godless world by the survival of the fittest. Without the pure, unconditional love of God turning the other cheek (cf. *Matthew 5:39*) becomes a folly and true religion deemed as a crutch for the weak-minded. As St Paul says, *Christ crucified is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles* (cf. *1 Corinthians 1:23*).

Self Redemption. Many are the modern religions nowadays that teach self-redemption. What a comfort to those who deny the existence of God or refuse to submit to Him. But what a terrifying falsehood that affects their eternal destiny! The Prince of this world (Satan) certainly has done a great job in promoting this falsehood. To this the Lord says: *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast* (*Ephesians 2:8-9*).

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You came into our world that we may have life and have it abundantly not only in this world but more importantly in the coming one that never ends. Through Your selfless death on the Cross, You revealed what true love is. You are the only one who will love me with an eternal unchanging love for You are the only eternal immutable God. Lord You must increase and I decrease. Open my eyes to the foolishness of my selfish nature that will only lead me to eternal unhappiness. Teach me to walk in Your ways. For You made me only for Yourself - that I may find my eternal happiness and fulfilment in You alone and not in other creatures or things. Fill me with Your wisdom that I may not be self-seeking but to seek You only – the source of real peace and joy. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.