

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
January 29, 2017  
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### **Reading 1 Zep 2:3; 3:12-13**

Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth, who have observed his law; Seek justice, seek humility; perhaps you may be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger.

But I will leave as a remnant in your midst a people humble and lowly, who shall take refuge in the name of the LORD: the remnant of Israel. They shall do no wrong and speak no lies; nor shall there be found in their mouths a deceitful tongue; they shall pasture and couch their flocks with none to disturb them.

### **Reflection**

The Bible abbreviation Zep represents the Book of Zephaniah, a prophet, who wrote this prophecy between 640 – 630 B.C. To understand the reading better and to answer questions such as “why was God so angry,” I read further into various segments of the book.

According to the New American Bible, Zephaniah wrote this material during a time when the people of Jerusalem were not on their best behavior. They were worshiping the sun, moon, stars and idols and God was not pleased. To get His people back on track, God inspired Zephaniah to write the first chapter of the prophecy which is a very scary description of doom and gloom as God destroys the earth and everything on it.

This is followed later by the first part of our reading. God is telling the people of Judah there is still hope they may be spared on this day of doom if they shape up and follow His law. Although the first part of this chapter is still describing God's judgment on people, by the end of the chapter, Zephaniah explains that the Day of the Lord will have brought about a change in the people. God will remove the “proud braggarts”.

So, those who repented and chose to serve the Lord would be protected by the Lord. Zephaniah goes on to describe the people of Jerusalem and God “singing joyfully”. God also will “rejoice over the people of Jerusalem with gladness and renew them in His love”.

Our Creator is a God of love who still loves us even when we're on the wrong path. When we hop back on the right path, He just might show us how much He loves us.

### **Reading 2 1 Cor 1:26-31**

Consider your own calling, brothers and sisters. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God. It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord.”

### **Reflection**

I can relate to this reading from the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians for I tend to be more foolish than wise. I think Paul is saying that everyone is equal in the eyes of God and that we are all called to be disciples of Christ.

I think the last sentence in the second reading, says that God sent Jesus to us to be an example of how to live by the Word of God and to save us from our sins. I'm not sure how I am in Jesus Christ. However, I do believe that He is in each of us. I see evidence of this especially at St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Church in Chatham. There are so many people at St. Joe's that do God's work in the communities in and surrounding the Village of Chatham. St. Joe's has a different

atmosphere than any other church that I have experienced. It truly is a vibrant and active community. The atmosphere, both during mass and when the church is empty is such that I know that God is present.

### **Gospel Mt 5:1-12a**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

### **Reflection**

Matthew's gospel seems to do a nice job of clarifying and summing up the theme for today. Those who are humble and follow God's word will be protected and rewarded by God. The Lord is a loving God who will take care of His people and who will provide to them what they need. I think Jesus is letting us know that God is always there for us. If we serve God and try to be like the various examples of "Blessed" people in Matthew's gospel, Jesus also says we will be rewarded in heaven. Some of these things are easier to do than others. I think striving to be a good person and having faith in God and remaining loyal to God is a good place to start.