

10th Sunday Ordinary Time – Where are you?

Based on the following Scripture passages... Genesis 3:9-15, 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1, and Mark 3:20-35



Crazy Relatives

Do you have a crazy relative who keeps the family history? You know that relative that has a habit of finding pictures of family members with the goofy hairstyles, or dated wardrobes, or those embarrassing moments, which provide proof that you came from a subhuman gene pool. My sister-in-law is an ancestry.com professional who is always tracking down the oddities of our family life.

Several weeks ago she posted a family picture of me, and my family from the late 1980's. The caption in the picture took particular issue with my outfit, which was reminiscent of Sonny Crockett who was detective and the main character on the hit show Miami Vice. Sonny Crockett was played by actor Don Johnson, who became incredibly famous, and wealthy as a result of the show. Sadly I cannot claim any connection to Don Johnson beyond the turned-up collar of my polo shirt... No fame, no fortune, much less hair and suffice it to say I am a much bigger man than he is (he was only 5'9" and 180 pounds – I won't give you my stats). But I want you to keep Don Johnson in mind... not me, as we reflect on God's words in Scripture today.

So where are you?

It is ironic that these are the first words God spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden. God's first words to them were in the form of a question... and it is a question that applies to us as well... Where are you?

10th Sunday Ordinary Time – Where are you?

This is not a question about where Adam and Eve were physically. We know this because Adam and Eve heard God walking in the Garden. They were so close to him that they knew and could hear his movements... That says something about their relationship with God. It was close... very close... in fact it was intimate.

The question God asked Adam and Eve was a question of relationship. He wanted to know where their hearts were. He wants to know where our hearts are too? So... where are you?

Fixing our eyes on the unseen?

Where we are with God has a great deal to do with how we see. Perhaps this statement presents some difficulties for us. After all we can not see God... and some would say what we can only believe in what is real... that which we can experience with our senses. That which we can see, feel, taste, smell or hear. Anything outside those senses would be considered unknowable, and to some unseen.

This past week Don Johnson was the subject of two homilies I had the pleasure of hearing. I am a little embarrassed to admit that when I heard these homilies after that family post I felt a certain nudge to include my kindred spirit in this homily. And so I would like to share this story...

Don Johnson was at the height of his fame and he had thrown a party at his Florida home. Obviously this home was extravagant... with its own private harbor, which anchored Don Johnson's three yachts. Everybody who was anybody in Hollywood, politics, and sports was in attendance at this party. As Mr. Johnson admits he was looking at all that he had... which was considerable. It was right there in front of him, for all to see. The property, the friends, the money... all of it... in plain sight. He thought to himself... I have become successful beyond my wildest imaginations. I have everything I ever wanted! I have everything anybody could ever want. And then in a moment of brutal honesty he asked himself this question... Then why am I so (expletive deleted) miserable?

Don Johnson had defined happiness by what he could obtain with his wealth... things that could be seen. Adam and Eve were happy too, until they stopped seeing straight. It is interesting to note that the fruit of the tree was pleasing to the eye.

Things like money, fame and power look good to us. They are signs that we are successful... that we are doing okay. But the truth of the matter is that the more we

10th Sunday Ordinary Time – Where are you?

have the less happy we seem to be. The things of this world like our life are transient... they are not meant to last and because they are transient they will never bring us happiness, they will only leave us wanting and searching for more. That is because happiness is not rooted in the things of this world. Happiness, true happiness... is found in relationships... with others and most especially with God. And our happiness or lack there of, is a reflection of where we are with God.

Spiritual strength

I often wonder if people think that Jesus was a happy man? After all by all accounts he was poor and had little to show for efforts. He wandered from place to place without a place to lay his head, but he seemed to have plenty of friends.

One of my favorite pictures of Jesus is titled the “Laughing Christ.” I have that picture posted in my classroom to remind me that Jesus probably found things quite humorous... especially when it came to the apostles. It reminds to laugh often and to not take myself too seriously. That picture reinforces my belief that Jesus was extremely happy.

We can see proof of this when he is tempted in the desert. He rejects Satan’s offer of sustenance (symbolic of satisfying the desires of the flesh), the offer of prestige and finally the promise of power. Only a man who has “real” power can do that. A man with real power is also a man who is happy... a man who knows where he is.

So where did he get this power to resist the allures of the flesh, pride and power? He was able to resist because his focus was on the “unseen.” He could see the “unseen,” he could hear the “unseen” ... just like our first parents. The “unseen” was the Father, and Jesus was anchored in an intimate relationship to him. And because of that relationship... His power exceeded that of even the strongest opponent... Satan! And it is this same power that can rescue any of us, no matter how horrifying the situations that hold us bound. It is this same power that guarantees us the promise of happiness.

The power of Christ teachings

The true disciple believes in the power of Christ, and his teaching. Discipleship is about being a part of a family... it is about being in relationship. For the Christian true family is anchored in relationship to the Father. It is the ability to hear his

10th Sunday Ordinary Time – Where are you?

footsteps... It is the surety that we are where we should be. It is being able to say here I am Lord... to not have to hide... and not be ashamed.

Binding ourselves to what is unseen.

Christ is stronger than our greatest fears and stronger than anything that binds us. He has shown us that true strength and happiness have nothing to do with the trappings of this earthly life. We are made for something much better than anything this world has to offer. We are made for happiness and true happiness is being where the Father and Jesus are.

Strength comes to anyone who believes in Christ and takes on his mission. That mission is anchored in aligning ourselves with the Father's will. It is there we will find happiness. It is there that we can be assured that he will give us the strength to do what he has called us to do.

It is all about relationship... About binding ourselves to what is "unseen."

So Where are you?

Are you hiding or are you looking for the "unseen?"

I hope that you are looking for the "unseen." For there is your strength to live the mission you have been called to by Christ. And ultimately this is where you will find true happiness.

May God Bless You!