

October 1, 2017

John's father died, and John went to a funeral home and said, "give my father the best funeral you can give him." So, the funeral director did that. The next month, John got a bill for ten grand. He said, "okay" and he paid it, no problem. The next month, he got a bill for \$85. He said "he must have forgotten something." So, he paid it. The next month, he got an \$85 bill. "This is crazy." So, he called up the funeral representative and said, "what's going on?" The funeral director said, "you told me to give your Dad the best funeral, so, I rented him the best tux." Want to get back at your kids?

Our second reading is very interesting because it's so old. Saint Paul's letters were written before the gospels were written. Saint Paul's letter were written between 40 and 60 A.D. When did Jesus die? 33 A.D. So, very very soon after, we see Saint Paul in action. Way before the gospel writers. Philippians is one of those readings written early, after Paul's second journey. What we see in Philippians, in the second half, "Who though he was in the form of God, did not deem equality with God..". This is a prayer of the early church. A prayer that's already written in this form, 10 or 11 years after the resurrection of Jesus. The only thing older, for a prayer that we have, is the Our Father. This prayer is one of the oldest that we have. They may have put it to music and been able to sing. But, there was no note notation back then. You'd have to pass it from person to person and train them as to the tune. We see that he says, "Jesus did not deem equality with God, something to be grasped." Rather he says, "He took the form of a slave." God did not come to be God. Because, how would that help us? "Oh, by the way, this is how you are supposed to be." We're not God. He came to be a slave. At the time He came, slavery was in existence all around the world. People knew what slavery was all about. No right to life. No right to property, no right to anything. You were property. It was a miserable existence. Jesus came to lower himself to the lowest form of humanity. A slave. He showed this by dying on the cross. The lowest form of punishment, ever. So, when he says Jesus did not come to be God, Jesus wanted to show us the way, by being servants for each other. And, servants of the Father. Jesus always said, "Your will be done, not mine."

We see in the first reading, God is letting us know just how important, 700 years before Jesus, being obedient to God, being a servant to God, is. He says, (once again this is unfair for us on earth, but it's God who makes the rules and that's the way it should be), He said, "you could have a virtuous good life, but, if you do an evil deed and you die, then you're going to hell. That's the mortal sin clause. But, he says if you are bad and evil and at the very end you do a good deed, you can be saved. We talked a little about this last week. God is not a god of the past. God is not keeping score, we keep score. We have point systems. Frequent flyer miles. All these different kinds of things were we add things up. We think, "oh, I'm a good person." But, if you commit an evil act and then die, forget it. Because, God is a God of the present. Right here, right now. The past is no longer in existence for him, he doesn't look at the past. We can't look at the past either. We look at the past so many times, "oh, I was an abused kid, that's why I murdered this person." No. What are you doing right now? The past has no bearing. We live too much in the past. We try and protect ourselves from the future. God's not in the past, God's not in the future, He is right here right now. God says, "whatever you are right now, is what I count." We think, oh my gosh, that's unfair. Well, that's the way God is.

Jesus shows us another form of obedience to the Father. Two sons. Jesus is always about two sons. To one, the father says, "would you please go work in the vineyard." The son says, "No." In my house, growing up, that was a death threat. Dad would take us out and try to make a new one. We never said

that word. But, the son changed his mind, he repented and he went and worked anyway. So, he did the fathers will. The second one said, "oh, yeah Dad, whatever." He is blowing smoke. He doesn't do it. We call this kid a hypocrite, because he says one thing and does another. It is not the fathers will. In Greek, hypocrite comes from a term that means another face, today, actor. The Greek actors used to put on masks in their theater, to be another person. They changed characters, they didn't have special effects, so they changed masks. Jesus said, "if you are a hypocrite, I will vomit you out of my mouth." That's how much he hates that. Hypocrites don't tell the truth. They don't live the truth. They don't act the truth. Jesus says in other places, "say yes when you mean yes, and no when you mean no." In other words, stick to the truth. I read somewhere on the internet that you should always tell the truth because then you don't have to remember what you said. And I like that, as a guy, I like that. Because, what happens when you're with a woman? She remembers every word you ever said, so it's best to tell the truth. God is like that. He knows that. So, always tell the truth and you'll be fine with God and your wife. Jesus does not like us being false because God is not false. If God means yes, He says, "yes." If God means no He says, "No." This gives us a chance for salvation. First, say yes to God. Obey God in all things. Don't think you're God. Always be humble. "Yes Lord, whatever you say Lord." And that goes for His Church on earth because, it's the body of Christ. It's an extension of God, Himself. The other thing is, what we are good at in America, making excuses. All of us rely on an excuse. Let's justify our actions, let's try to make somebody believe in something else. In confession, this happens all the time, for all the priests I know. We are supposed to come in and just say the sin. But people come in, "well father, I missed Mass on Sunday because I was traveling. And I ask what state and they tell me. And I say, "are there no Catholic Churches in that state?" "Well, you know...." No, uhuh, no excuses. You missed Mass on Sunday, period. There's no excuses. We as Catholics, in this country, have been giving into picking and choosing. We can't pick and choose. I'm Catholic but, I'm for abortion. You can't do that. You're either Catholic or you're not. You stand for what God is doing in His Church. We don't make excuses. God is not going to listen to excuses. "Did you do that or did you not?" And that's it. So, we don't rely on excuses, we rely on mercy. "God, I'm a sinner, I'm not as good as I think I am, I am a sinner, be merciful to me. There is only salvation in repentance.

God bless you.