

# **Eighth Sunday of the Year – March 3, 2019**

Sirach 27: 4-7 1 Corinthians 15: 54-58 Luke 6: 39-45

Whether it is on a bumper sticker, or on a billboard, or on social media, we often encounter brief, pithy sayings or quotes that may suggest a bit of wisdom but which also may require both some reflection and some introspection. They may well encourage examining whether there is meaning and significance for ourselves in a particular quote we encounter.

What is put before us today by our God through the writings of inspired authors are just such brief and pithy quotes. They are full of meaning in themselves. But they are even more challenging in the response they call from us.

We hear, for example, from the author Sirach, who was writing about 200 years before Christ and who sought to blend the wisdom of the Mosaic tradition of the Jewish people within sights from Greek thought that was current at his time. He reminds us that a sieve sifts out what is on the outside to reveal the truth of what is on the inside; that the heat of a kiln melts away the imperfections, so that the true object that was molded could be revealed; and that the health of the fruit that can be seen gives evidence of the true health of the tree that bears it. Anyone of these sayings can be a source of long and hard reflection on how sincere and truthful we are in living out our relationship with God.

We hear from Saint Paul who emphasizes to the Corinthians and to us that what we profess by faith in the Resurrection means that the power and effect of sin and death has been overcome in us. There is no reason for defeat or despair on our part. Rather, we are strengthened in hope even in cases of failure and sin, because the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus prompts us to pick ourselves up and go on again. It prompts us to live in a way that reflects that we truly are a “Resurrection” people.



The sayings of Jesus which we have heard today are found elsewhere in other Gospel accounts. They are gathered here by Saint Luke and are included in what is called the “Sermon on the Plain.” Each of them reflects a basic truth, and insight, into what Jesus Christ is revealing. Each tells of how one who accepts and lives his teaching is to conduct his or her life.

In a way, what Jesus is saying is really self-evident. One needs to be able to see in order help another who cannot see. If a person wants to learn, it is necessary to listen openly to the one who is teaching. If one’s vision is blocked in some way that needs to be resolved before hoping to improve the vision of someone else. Finally, what is produced on the outside is the best source of understanding what is on the inside..

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actions and words. They cannot be just ineffective formulas that are repeated. Rather, what we do and what we say, in ways that are sincere and true, are to transform us. This does not happen instantaneously. It takes place gradually. It is not done with the idea of achieving a reward for doing well. It is done out of genuine and sincere conviction about the meaning of any of these sayings and their effect on any of us and all of us.

As we begin the Season of Lent this Wednesday, a time of considering the highest qualities and possibilities we possess to be creatures of a loving God such as these sayings encourage, we are to make an even greater effort to understand and to embody what it means to be image and likeness of a good and gracious God.