

Epiphany III (2012)

(Romans 12:16-21, St. John 2:1-11)

“And his mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”

The instructions given by the Holy Mother of our Lord to the servants at the wedding feast at Cana are the same instructions our Holy Mother the Church has been giving to the servants of our Lord Jesus for over two thousand years.

You and I, and every person in the Church who has been born again in the purifying waters of Holy Baptism, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise in Confirmation, and fed with the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus in Holy Communion have been instructed by the command: *“Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”*

Where do we hear and learn what it is our Lord wants us to do?

In Sacred Scripture.

Isaiah 28:9, 10 states *“Whom shall (the Lord) teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?...For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little.”*

In the study of Scripture: Prophet upon Prophet, Gospel version upon Gospel version, Epistle upon Epistle, we, the servants of the Lord, learn what He commands us to do.

This morning’s Epistle is a mere *five verses* long, and yet in those five verses we are given several very important instructions.

Such is the riches and the depth of Sacred Scripture!

Through the Holy Ghost inspired writings of His servant St. Paul, our Lord gives specific instructions on how He wants all of His servants to live and give witness to Him in this world.

We are to be humble, not conceited. We are to live honestly before all men. As much as possible we are to live in peace with all men, not avenging ourselves but allowing God to repay when, if and as He sees fit.

We are to be kind to those who act like enemies towards us, overcoming the evil they show towards us with the good we show towards them; good that comes from the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts.

In just those five verses of Sacred Scripture we are given a deep and rich list of things our Lord Jesus tells us, His servants, to do.

Are we doing them?

Do we humble ourselves before other believers and give equal weight to the wisdom God has given them as we give to the wisdom He has given us?

Do we live honestly before all men at all times? Or do we live a “double life,” acting like Christians at church and around those who know our claim to have received saving faith from Christ, then acting another way around those whom we do not know, or who do not know we are believers?

Do we, as much as it is within our power, live peaceably with others?

Do we strive to live peaceably with our own families, neighbors, co-workers, our fellow parishioners and with just every day people we encounter? Our Lord’s Word instructs us to do so.

Do we avenge ourselves when we’ve been wronged because the world says we have the right to do it? Or do we allow God to decide if and how to avenge us; whether in this life or the next?

Are we kind to those who act like enemies towards us? Do we obey what Jesus says in St. Matthew 5 and turn the other cheek, feed and / or give something to drink to our enemies?

Or, will we kick an enemy when he is down and take every advantage over him we can, when we can, to get our “pay-back”?

We know what Scripture tells us to do. But what do *we* do?

In St. James 1:21-22 we are told: *“...receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”*

We are to receive the instructions of God’s Word and then live out what we read and hear preached and taught from it.

We deceive ourselves if we read our Bibles but then don’t do what read.

We deceive ourselves if we listen to the Scriptures preached and taught during mass or study but then do not live what we hear.

In order to prevent ourselves from being deceived, St. James states we must receive God’s Word with meekness.

In order to avoid being deceived we must fully realize Jesus is the Master and we are His servants. We have to know that we have been bought with a price: the price of the precious Blood of the Son of God!

As the holy Anglican priest John Keble wrote in the 19th century “*We must become Jesus’ servants, His slaves, His absolute property.*”

What do we think of Keble’s exhortation?

Do we see ourselves as God’s servants? Have we given up all rights to ourselves as servant must do?

Do we see ourselves as God’s *absolute* property to do with as *He* pleases?

Do we want to be His servants and His property? Do we embrace and relish it as the greatest privilege one can be given on this earth?

Is being His servant and His property our first desire, our first love?

Are we, like those servants in the Gospel Lesson, willing to do “*Whatsoever He saith?*”

As we go through our daily lives what catches our attention?

Do we see the needs, spiritual or temporal, that so many have, many of which are desperate?

Do we see them, or are we focused only on ourselves and our own perceived needs?

If we do see them are we ready to meet them when the Master tells us to?

In the Gospel Lesson we are told that though our Lord’s “*hour had not yet come,*” though He was not ready to begin his public ministry, there was a need at that wedding feast in Cana and He acted to meet it.

Do we follow His example?

When we see the needs and hear the cries do we act or do we delay, hoping the need will go away from our attention?

Do we love and care about others enough to serve them with the good wine of Jesus Christ even if we are not ready?

Even if it is an inconvenience to us? Even if *our* hour has not yet come?

If we do not love and care for others in that manner then we must ask God to forgive us and give us the gift of meekness St. James says we must have in order to receive the Word of love that will save our souls and move us to serve others.

We need to pray that we will become good and faithful servants; servants our Lord will tell to draw out and serve the “good wine” He has made to meet the needs of those who are so desperately in need of the Salvation He wrought for the world.

The core of such service is devotion to the *Person* of Jesus Christ.

It is Christ Himself, the hope of glory, living in and through us.

It is the desire for His life, death and resurrection to be lived in and through us.

If our reason for serving is self satisfaction, or guilt or pity for others, then we are merely “social activists” with a Christian cover.

But, if we serve to bring glory and honor to Christ.

If we are totally devoted to Him, and seek to love and serve others solely for His glory and out of love for the people for whom He lived for and died to save, then the service we give will be true service.

It will be the kind of service our Lord commands us to do!

It will also be the kind of service that obeys what our Holy Mother the Church instructs us, the servants of Christ, to do.

It will be the kind of service the servants at the wedding feast in Cana did.

It will be service that is obedient when told:

“*Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*” **Amen.**