

Twenty Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C  
Habakkuk 1:2-3, 2:2-4 || 2 Timothy 1:6-9, 13-14 || Luke 17:5-10  
THE JUST ONE LIVES BY FAITH

Synopsis:

Faith brings us the light, which scatters the darkness.

Lord, increase our faith.

The righteous will live by his faith.

This faith transforms us, empowers us, and lifts us.

All things are possible to those who live in faith.

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A man just got married and was returning home with his wife. They were crossing a lake in a boat when suddenly a great storm arose. The man was a warrior, but the woman became very much afraid because it seemed almost hopeless. The boat was small, and the storm was really huge, and at any moment they were going to be drowned. But the man sat silently, calm and quiet as if nothing was happening.

The woman was trembling, and she said, "Are you not afraid?" This may be our last moment of life! It doesn't seem that we will be able to reach the other shore. Only some miracle can save us; otherwise, death is certain. Are you not afraid? Are you mad or something? Are you a stone or something?" The man laughed and took the sword out of its sheath. The woman was even more puzzled: What was he doing? Then he brought the naked sword close to the woman's neck, so close that just a small gap was there, it was almost touching her neck. He said, "Are you afraid?" She started to laugh and said, "Why should I be afraid? If the sword is in your hands, why should I be afraid? I know you love me." He put the sword back and said, "This is my answer. I know God Loves me, and the storm is in His hands. SO WHATSOEVER IS GOING TO HAPPEN IS GOING TO BE GOOD. If we survive, good; if we don't survive, good, because everything is in His hands, and He cannot do anything wrong."

An American writer Stephenie Meyer says, "God is the reason why even in pain, I smile; in confusion, I understand; in betrayal, I trust; and in fear, I continue to fight." We need to develop such a Trust in God. This is the trust, which we need to imbibe, and which can transform our whole life. Holy Father Pope Francis says, "In the face of unjust and painful situations, faith brings us the light which scatters the darkness. Faith makes us open to the quiet presence of God at every moment of our lives, in every person, and in every situation. There are many unjust situations, but we know that God is suffering with us, experiencing them at our side. He does not abandon us." We often feel that God has forsaken us when hatred and enmities dominate. The prophet Habakkuk too thought so. In his anguish, he even challenged God: "How long, O Lord? I cry for help but you do not listen." We too, in most situations make this question.

Like the disciples in today's Gospel, doubtless many of us have made our way to this church this morning for the same reason: we are seeking God, we want to know God's presence

and recognize God's activity in our life and in the world, we are hungry for a faith that will support us, empower us, and offer meaning, direction, and a sense of purpose to our life. We too can identify with the disciples' longing: "Lord, increase our faith."

The readings from Habakkuk and Luke are concerned with faith. We don't get around to Habakkuk very often, but he was a prophet with something to say on this question of faith. And the reason he had something to say about it was that he had his own struggles, just like you and I. This prophet lived during a time of great chaos and uncertainty in the history of his people. He was the spokesman of his people before the Lord, crying out for help amidst the problems of his day. He asked God, "How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen?" He is not complaining about his personal situation but is speaking for his people. There is violence and injustice all around him. Why does the Lord tolerate this situation, he wants to know. Why doesn't the Lord step in to save his people? He was eager to hear from the Lord, so he took his stand like a watchman, scouting the spiritual horizon for anything that would reveal the Lord's answer to his plea for help. And the revelation came at last. "Then the Lord replied: The righteous will live by his faith." In other words, those who are in the right relationship with the Lord will survive through difficult times by trusting in him.

In the Gospel, we see disciples asking "Lord, increase our faith." It is a kind of request raised on our behalf. The disciples found their faith on shaky ground when they discovered they had to change their own behavior. The disciples, like you and me, had to learn to get their focus off their own resentment and defensiveness and put their trust in the Lord. Faith like this can move mountains. It can transform lives. Nothing in the entire world can overcome this faith—no fear or anxiety or worry, no hatred or evil, no suffering or failure or loss. This faith transforms us, empowers us, and lifts us. It teaches us that love is stronger than hate, that good is stronger than evil, and that hope is stronger than despair. It entrusts all to God, and with it we can live in hope and freedom, joy, and peace. To sum up, the words of Jesus in our gospel lesson: "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could uproot any worry or anxiety, any trouble or misery, any obstacle to love, any hatred or fear, and cast them all into the sea." All things are possible to those who live in faith. To this, we say, "Lord, increase our faith!"

Quotes for further reflection:

"Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe." - St. Augustine

"Faith has to do with things that are not seen and hope with things that are not in hand."  
- St. Thomas Aquinas

"Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith." - St. Francis Assisi

"But for Me to be able to act upon the soul, the soul must have faith. O how pleasing to Me is living faith! (1420)" - St. Faustina

**Blessings!**

**Fr. Raja Selvam**