

6th Sunday Ordinary Time
February 13, 2022

The Lord Never Disappoints

Readings: Jeremiah 17:5-8; 1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20; Luke 6:17, 20-26

“Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose hope is the LORD.” Disappointment is a painful lesson in life, one that we typically learn in some form early on in life. While it certainly can be motivated by an undisciplined greed for position or power, more likely it is because we really wanted something and were passed over.

Some early memories are traumatic, others are moments of great excitement. Still others are recollections of disappointment. The only thing I recall about the Vikings first Super Bowl on January 11, 1970 was being called away from the television at the end of the game saying the dinner was ready...the game was effectively over! The grainy YouTube video of the game is a far cry from the pageantry of today's game! Suffice it to say, someone will be very disappointed by 8:00 pm tonight!

At other times our disappointment is much more heart wrenching. We may be disappointed in our relationships, our performance at work, school, in our sports team and yes, even in our Church. We may have high expectations for ourselves that were crushed when we did not perform as we felt we should. Where does this feeling originate?

A starting place might be asking ourselves in whom or in what do we place our hope and trust? To use Jeremiah's analogy- trust in the Lord enables us to be like the tree planted beside the waters. Our roots are deep; our foundation is firm, not easily shaken. Trust in the Lord affords us a steadiness which sees us through both times of plenty and want.

Trusting the Lord enables us to endure, like the tree planted alongside its source of sustenance. It provides support, whether in the blistering heat from above or the parched land below. I think of a passage from the Book of Sirach: “The day of prosperity makes one forget adversity; the day of

adversity makes one forget prosperity.”¹ This steadiness is constitutive of a long-lasting spiritual health. We cannot ride the wave from one amazing experience to another; it will never last. We must be rooted.

Disappointments happen. The real question is whether they will crush you? Will they overcome you, robbing you of peace? The answer to that question is largely within your control. “Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings, who seeks his strength in flesh,” says Jeremiah.

Why does he say this? Because the flesh, by its very constitution, is finite and cannot quench our capacity for infinite love. Flesh is material and confined to space. Our souls are immaterial and can reach for the infinite and experience union with God through grace.

The Lord calls blessed those who have put their trust in his kingdom to come, and not in the security of the present life. A heart that longs for heaven forms the core of every human person. Like a deer that longs for running streams, so my soul longs for you, my God. Do we long to be a saint or to be admired by others?

Once, John Henry Newman’s grand-nephew came for a visit. When he saw his great uncle dressed as a Cardinal, the boy asked: “Which is greater, a Cardinal or a Saint?” Without any hesitation, Newman responded: “Cardinals belong to this world, and Saints to heaven.”²

At some point, we come to the realization that ultimately the only person responsible for our happiness is ourselves. While happiness is a gift from God, we must cooperate with the graces he offers to us. Whether Ben Sirach or Jeremiah, the great leaders in the Bible were not afraid to put the question back to the people. You, you must choose. No one can do it for you. You must choose to trust the Lord, and Him alone.

¹ Sirach 11:25

² Louis Bouyer, *Newman, His Life and Spirituality: An Intellectual and Spiritual Biography of John Henry Newman* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), p. 426.