

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: Cycle "A"
Sunday, 12 November 2017

THERE'S A **WORD** IN TODAY'S GOSPEL,
THAT YOU'D EXPECT TO **HEAR FROM A 2-YEAR-OLD ...**

- THAT WORD IS: **NO!**
- WHEN ALL THE **BRIDESMAIDS** GOT **UP TO TRIM** THEIR **LAMPS**,
THE **FOOLISH SAID** TO THE WISE:
→ **"GIVE US SOME OF YOUR OIL
BECAUSE OUR LAMPS ARE GOING OUT."**
- TO WHICH **THE WISE** RESPONDED: **"NO!"**
- THIS SEEMS LIKE A **RATHER SHOCKING** RESPONSE.
 - AFTER ALL, THIS IS A **PARABLE** THAT **DESCRIBES GOD'S KINGDOM**,
SO ONE MIGHT **EXPECT** THE BRIDESMAIDS
TO BE A BIT MORE **GENEROUS ...**
IN SHARING WHAT THEY HAVE WITH THOSE IN NEED.
 - **HOW IS IT THAT THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH SAYING "NO!"?**

THE WISE BRIDESMAIDS CAN GET AWAY WITH SAYING "NO"
BECAUSE **IT'S AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE** → **GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.**

- IN FACT, **NO IS AN ACCEPTABLE RESPONSE IN THE KINGDOM** OF GOD.
- YOU SEE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT,
IN THIS PARABLE,
ALL TEN BRIDESMAIDS KNOW ONE ANOTHER.
- **THE WISE BRIDESMAIDS KNOW** THAT THE **OTHER 5 ARE FOOLISH.**
 - THEY KNOW THAT THE **FOOLISH ARE HABITUALLY NEGLIGENT**
 - THEY **SHARE A HISTORY** WITH EACH OTHER, AND
TIME AND AGAIN **THE WISE** FOUND THEMSELVES:
 - **USED BY THE FOOLISH**, and
 - **CONSTANTLY** HAVING TO **BAIL THEM OUT** OF TROUBLE.
- SO, OVER A PERIOD OF TIME IT BECAME RATHER APPARENT THAT
ALWAYS GIVING THE FOOLISH WHATEVER THEY WANTED
WASN'T BEING HELPFUL TO THEM.
 - IN FACT, **ALWAYS GIVING IN**
WAS **SIMPLY ENABLING** THEIR **NEGLIGENCE!**
 - **THAT IS WHY** THE WISE HAVE THE **RIGHT TO REFUSE** THEIR REQUEST,
AND TO TELL THEM "NO!"

DON'T GET ME WRONG.

- **"YES" IS AT THE VERY HEART OF THE GOSPEL.**
 - **GIVING OF OURSELVES** FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS IS WHAT **MAKES US AUTHENTIC DISCIPLES** OF JESUS.
 - **LAYING DOWN** OUR LIVE FOR ANOTHER IS THE **CRUX OF SALVATION**
- **BUT IT'S PRECISELY BECAUSE** GIVING AND SACRIFICING ARE AT THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL THAT TODAY'S PARABLE IS SO IMPORTANT.
 - BECAUSE **WHAT THE PARABLE IS CALLING US TO IS WISDOM!**
 - A **WISDOM THAT DISCERNs** ONE THING FROM ANOTHER.
 - **THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN:**
 - A **YES** TO SOMETHING THAT **HURTS** ANOTHER, and A YES THAT **HELPS!**
 - A **SACRIFICE** THAT'S **REDEMPTIVE**, and A SACRIFICE THAT'S **DESTRUCTIVE.**
 - A **"NO"** SPOKEN OUT OF **SELFISHNESS**, and A **"NO"** SPOKEN OUT OF **WISDOM!**
 - **TO BE A FOLLOWER** OF JESUS
 - WE ARE CALLED TO **GIVE OF OURSELVES** ... BUT WE ARE **NOT EXPECTED TO ABANDON** OURSELVES **INTO THE HANDS OF** THOSE WHO WOULD **HURT** AND **ABUSE** US.
 - WE ARE CALLED TO **RECOGNIZE** THAT:
 - **THERE ARE FOOLISH PEOPLE** IN THE WORLD
 - **PEOPLE WHO WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE** OF US & HURT US.

IF WE ARE WISE:

- WE'LL **FIGURE OUT WHO** THOSE PEOPLE ARE
- WE'LL REALIZE THAT **WE NOT ONLY HAVE A RIGHT**, but WE ALSO HAVE A **RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT OURSELVES** FROM HARM.

SO, **IF YOU FIND** YOURSELF IN A **SITUATION** WHERE YOU ARE **BEING HURT** WHETHER **PHYSICALLY, VERBALLY, OR MENTALLY ...**

- DO **NOT** THINK THAT IT IS **"HOLINESS" TO PUT UP WITH** THE MISTREATMENT!
- YOU'RE A PERSON OF VALUE, AND TODAY'S GOSPEL ASSURES YOU THAT **THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IT'S OKAY (and proper) TO SAY "NO!"** ... whether that's directed to
 - YOUR SPOUSE,
 - A PARENT,
 - A FRIEND, or
 - YOUR EMPLOYER.

AND IF YOU FIND YOURSELF IN A **RELATIONSHIP WHERE YOU ARE BEING MANIPULATED** ... and ARE SPOKEN TO IN A WAY THAT **ERODES YOUR SENSE OF SELF-WORTH:**

- DO **NOT** THINK THAT YOU ARE FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS BY **SUFFERING SILENTLY.**
- YOU ARE A PERSON OF VALUE, and YOU HAVE EVERY **RIGHT and a moral obligation TO SAY:**
"NO! THIS MUST STOP!"

WHEN YOU FIND THAT SOMEONE **HABITUALLY LIES TO YOU**, AND CONTINUALLY **PROMISES ONE THING** ... BUT ALWAYS **DELIVERS ANOTHER:**

- YOU ARE **NOT DOING** YOURSELF, OR THE **OTHER PERSON, ANY FAVORS** BY TAKING THEM AT THEIR WORD YET AGAIN.
- IN FACT, YOU HAVE A **RIGHT and a moral obligation TO SAY:**
*"NO! ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.
YOU HAVE GONE BACK ON YOUR WORD TIME AND AGAIN;
I WILL NOT PLACE MY TRUST IN YOU OR YOUR WORDS ANY LONGER!"*

THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT THERE ARE **PEOPLE** IN OUR WORLD WHO **ARE: FOOLISH, SELFISH, and MANIPULATIVE!**

- YES, JESUS CALLS US TO **LOVE THEM** ...
BUT HE DOES **NOT** CALL US TO **BELIEVE THEM.**
 - **FORGIVE THEM? YES!!!**
 - **TRUST THEM? NO!!! ABSOLUTELY NOT!!!**
- TODAY'S **PARABLE CALLS US TO WISDOM:**
 - A **WISDOM THAT'S CAPABLE OF DISCERNING WHEN:**
 - IT IS **PRAISEWORTHY TO GIVE OF OURSELVES**, and
 - WHEN **IT'S SIMPLY A MATTER THAT ANOTHER PERSON USING US!**
 - WE ARE **CALLED TO BE PEOPLE OF WISDOM** WHO **LOOK AT OUR EXPERIENCE AND USE OUR HEADS**, BECAUSE **A WISE PERSON WILL KNOW:.**
 - **WHEN GIVING AND SACRIFICING ARE WARRANTED** and
 - WHEN THE **ONLY APPROPRIATE AND HOLY RESPONSE** IS TO TELL SOMEONE **"NO"**.