

11. September 2021

An indestructible house

Lk 6:43-49

'There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. Every tree can be told by its own fruit: people do not pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. Good people draw what is good from the store of goodness in their hearts; bad people draw what is bad from the store of badness. For the words of the mouth flow out of what fills the heart. 'Why do you call me, "Lord, Lord" and not do what I say?' Everyone who comes to me and listens to my words and acts on them - I will show you what such a person is like. Such a person is like the man who, when he built a house, dug, and dug deep, and laid the foundations on rock; when the river was in flood it bore down on that house but could not shake it, it was so well built. But someone who listens and does nothing is like the man who built a house on soil, with no foundations; as soon as the river bore down on it, it collapsed; and what a ruin that house became!'

Today's Gospel gives us a sure criterion to discern whether, for example, a deed is good in the eyes of God. Not infrequently it happens that something appears great and good, but then turns out to be wrong or even evil. Think of certain political systems or ideologies. These often promise better conditions and facilities for human life, but turn out to be morbid.

The same can happen to us with specific people. We place our expectations on them, let ourselves be fascinated by them or even idealise them. Great disappointments can then arise, which take away all illusions.

It is good that we are measured not only by our words and promises, but also by the way we put them into practice.

The Word of God must penetrate into us. If this does not happen, it will not transform us, but remains only a vague memory. Thus, it cannot become a living source, which leads us to act rightly and transforms our heart.

Again and again, we must become aware that we do not have a good heart from ourselves. Illusions about ourselves or about other people harm us. The Church's teaching, based on Scripture, makes it clear that, because of original sin, we are inclined to evil (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 403).

However, by God's grace, we can participate in His goodness. His Spirit strengthens us to do good and, if we cooperate with Him, we can overcome our inclinations to evil and acquire the virtues. Thus, our heart can become a “good heart”. Holy Scripture tells us, on the one hand: *“make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!”* (Ezek 18:31); and on the other hand: *“I - the Lord - will give you a new heart”* (36:26).

This realistic process includes our weaknesses, limitations and obscurities. But all this should not discourage us; rather, it invites us to sincerely seek God, so that His goodness may fill our hearts and remain in them.

Jesus shows us a royal way for this to happen: obedience to His Word and its concrete application.

Perhaps we can imagine this process as follows: Jesus speaks to us and conveys to us what He wants from us. At the same time as He asks something of us, He also gives us the grace to accept it and to put it into practice. This grace addresses our will, that is, our freedom, so that we give our consent to what the Lord wants. And if we do not allow ourselves to be confused in the time between listening and concrete application, then the Word becomes a fulfilled reality. Thus it penetrates the reality of our life and shapes it according to the Will of God.

Every time this happens, the earthly reality is touched through us by the divine Word, and thus the given situation is transformed according to God's plan. The same is true for our person, because every time we concretely apply the Word of God, it transforms us. The Spirit of the Lord becomes the criterion for our actions. He enlightens us and our hearts are transformed.

By consciously fulfilling God's Will, the heart is detached from its attachment to itself, and draws closer to the One who draws it to Himself. Since God is the source of all good and of love, and there is no shadow of it in Him, this love of His penetrates our heart and purifies it. Then the praise of God will flow more and more from the mouth, because the heart is filled with Him.

Thus we build an indestructible house!