

12. February 2024

Resisting doubt

Jas 1:1-11

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greeting. Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways, will receive anything from the Lord. Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like the flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

In this biblical passage we are once again essentially talking about faith, or rather about the doubt that opposes it.

Doubt is, in fact, a deep indecision, a hesitation to give oneself completely to God. And this doubt can grow to the point where it influences all our thoughts and our being. If doubt is not stopped, the reality of faith will vanish like a mist; and objections and 'buts' will come to the fore. It becomes increasingly difficult to make clear decisions! The hesitant person - that is, the one who doubts - is as if absent, his heart is not wide awake, his faith is not for him a powerful reality that surrounds and penetrates his whole life...

This is a deplorable state that affects the journey towards God, as the Apostle James describes in his letter. This is why it is essential to resist doubts about faith immediately. It is through faith that we cling firmly to God, without allowing doubts to penetrate and corrode the realm of feelings and thoughts.

Doubts are temptations that the Lord allows in order to strengthen patience on the path of faith, as today's reading says. If, in the face of doubt, we give ourselves completely to

God, our faith is strengthened. When doubts attack us, we can say, for example: "Lord, I believe you because you have said so". In this way we make an act of the will, even without having high religious emotions and without feeling God's presence in us. But it is precisely in these "dry acts of faith", against the attacks of doubt, that we grow spiritually, because we are no longer *"like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind"*.

It is important to resist doubt immediately, especially when it attacks matters of faith, for example, the certainty that God loves us, that He is merciful to us, etc. There is no point in arguing with doubt, trying to gather arguments against it; it is better to reject it forcefully and turn to God! It is similar to what we should do in the face of the temptations of the devil. We should never argue with him; we should only flee or drive him away. Let us remember what happened to the woman in paradise, who should have broken off the dialogue with the serpent instead of following his lead (cf. Gen 3).

Let us ask the Lord for the courage and wisdom to resist doubts, remembering that God uses temptations, however difficult and uncomfortable they may be, to form His own according to His will and to make them persevere in doing good, for *"steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing"*.