



Father Joseph's Outline for the Sunday After the Epiphany

Matthew 4:12-17 - Sunday 01/11/2009

“He withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth He went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali...From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” (Matthew 4:12-13,17)

Historical Playback

- The tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali (of the 12 tribes of Israel) lived in Galilee.
- Galilee was located in the northern part of the Holy Land, and included Nazareth and Cana.
- This land became an Assyrian province in the year 734 B.C.
 - “In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and captured Ijon and Abel-beth-maacah and Janoah and Kedesh and Hazor and Gilead **and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali**; and he carried them captive to Assyria.” (2nd Kings 15:29)
- The Assyrians mixed a pagan population into the area with the Jewish people.
 - Even though many of these pagans converted to Judaism, they were still looked at in contempt and were accused of neglecting the traditions.
- The Judeans were accustomed to saying that no prophet ever arose from Galilee.
 - This was a common saying, despite evidence to the contrary:
 - The Prophet Jonah, and probably Nahum too, were born there.
 - The ministry of both Elijah and Elisha included this area.
 - “Philip found Nathanael and told him, ‘We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ ‘Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?’ Nathanael asked.” (John 1:45-46)

Prophet Isaiah: “the Fifth Evangelist”

The Evangelist Matthew in today's reading alludes to the prophecy of Isaiah.

- Isaiah lived in Jerusalem at the time the land of Judah was threatened by the Assyrians.
- Prophet Isaiah's book has more prophecies about the ministry of the Messiah than any other book in the Old Testament.

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- “In the former time he brought into contempt **the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali**, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations....For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:1-6)

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“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

- God’s kingdom is not an earthly power or possession.
- The “great light” (Matthew 4:16) is not a physical light.
- **Repentance** is not an external appearance; it is a deep internal change.
 - Repentance is acquiring back our lost love for God and people.
 - Repentance is a radical change in one’s spirit.
 - Repentance is becoming aware of our slavery to sin and reversing back toward true freedom.
 - Repentance is the discovery of the truth that is found by looking deeper than the surface.
 - Repentance is the mystery behind true cleansing and purification.
 - Genuine repentance is always accompanied by true feeling of humility and compunction along with feeling of joyfulness and happiness.
 - Genuine repentance can be acquired only through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - Genuine repentance is followed by confession of sins, acceptance of accountability, baptism, change of way of life, and worthy fruits of repentance.

What to repent from?

- “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19-21)

Worthy Fruits of Repentance

- “For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.” (Romans 7:5)
- “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)
- “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth and find out what pleases the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:8-10)

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Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord and God, You are the true light of the world who came to enlighten us and to save us from the slavery of sin and death. Shine, O Lord, the true light of repentance in my darkened heart, casting into it Your divine grace. Cleanse and purify my soul, O Lord, and account me worthy of Your heavenly Kingdom. Do not deprive me of Your divine glory, along with the glory of Your eternal and loving Father and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit. Amen.

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