

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

23rd Sunday, Yr A

Reading 1 Ez 33:7-9

Thus says the LORD:

You, son of man, I have appointed watchman for the house of Israel; when you hear me say anything, you shall warn them for me. If I tell the wicked, "O wicked one, you shall surely die," and you do not speak out to dissuade the wicked from his way, the wicked shall die for his guilt, but I will hold you responsible for his death. But if you warn the wicked, trying to turn him from his way, and he refuses to turn from his way, he shall die for his guilt, but you shall save yourself.

Reading 2 Rom 13:8-10

Brothers and sisters:

Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.

Reflection Process / Questions

- **10 mins Reading** - underline a word or idea that strikes you
 - **10 mins Writing** - write what you have heard, write your response to a reflection question(s) that attracts your attention
 - **10 mins Sharing / Praying** - share with a friend or pray to God about livingtheword you have heard.
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- Ezekial is regarded as one of the 3 great prophets (Behind Isaiah and Jeremiah). Ezekiel is both a priest and a prophet and is speaking during a time of Exile away from Home. Without temple practises, faithfulness to the laws of God kept Jewish identity and preserved unity. Ezekiel provides a powerful image of a 'watchman', standing, watching, 'looking out' for dangers that may be approaching your family. God's family. Have you had the courage to 'say anything and warn others'? What happens without 'watchmen'? Are you challenged into action knowing that your salvation is at stake? What do you feel needs to be spoken of in your family? Community? Parish?
 - To love your neighbour as your own flesh is a striking challenge. Jewish interpretation wriggled around the challenge by regarding one's 'neighbour' as their own Jewish citizens. This allowed Jews not to care for 'outsiders'. Ponder the essential challenge of loving everyone as your own flesh. In what ways have you wriggled out of the challenge?

Gospel Mt 18:15-20

Jesus said to his disciples:

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that 'every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector.

Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, amen, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."



"If he listens to you, you have won over your brother." Matthew 18:15

- Matthew 18 is dedicated to life inside the Christian community. How is the community of Jesus supposed to respond to hurts and arguments that come from living together? A pattern is developed to avoid hurting and shaming those involved. Private conversation, then semi-private conversation and only as a last resort a public church decision. Reconciliation is not 'brooding' in silence. Is there anyone you need to approach 'face to face'?
- Have you experienced the importance of a wise person to help ensure 'every fact is established on the testimony of two or three'. Anger and resentment cripple christian hearts and disciples. Who are your 'two or three' guides to help your reconciliation journey?
- Treating a person like a Gentile or tax collector can be interpreted two ways. If reconciliation does not result, do we exclude or offer continued hopeful patience? What did Jesus do?
- The goal of Christian community is to witness to the world the love of Christ with each other. The authority to bind and loose is given by Jesus to the community in the context of prayer and agreement together. Is there need for prayer and discernment with a group about decisions you (or your ministry group, parish...) are making?
- Jesus makes a promise where two or more are in agreement in prayer it shall be granted to them. What prayer request would you like to share with friends. Who could you invite into your prayer / voice to God?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?