



Patience, a gift of the Spirit.

Episode summary

Back from Jerusalem and in order to better "help souls", Ignatius begins studying Latin and philosophy. First in Barcelona, then in Alcala and in Salamanca. It is a turbulent period because on one hand, he is strongly tempted to pray more instead of studying and attending classes, and on the other hand, he is worried by the Inquisition, which doesn't agree with him teaching catechism, having spiritual conversations or preaching without having a diploma and without belonging to a religious order. Twice he will be put in jail for several months, but each time he will be acquitted and released. Nevertheless, he will be forbidden to preach.

What is this exactly all about?

Like Ignatius, we can experience a great impatience. But this trend is often hiding a desire for omnipotence, for not giving up on anything, for "not missing anything" and for acting quickly on our own. Patience is a gift to be received from God and it is even one of his most eminent "qualities". Indeed, our God is fundamentally patient, taking all necessary time with His people, whether it might be in the desert or through his prophets via their repeated invitations to a conversion. Patience is a virtue that helps us to be internally adjusted to what is happening in our lives.

What does the Gospel say about it?

Jesus is showing great patience and tenacity facing his disciples' slowness and adversities. And this patience is perceptible since its "origins"! In this adventure of the incarnation, God has indeed chosen to go through the experience of a gestation period and a 30 years of "hidden life" learning. Becoming the Messiah is a learning process! A text gives us even more information about this patience which is to be found in God first: "the Parabola of the good seed and the bad" (Mt 13:24-30). This parabola relates an essential tragedy: there is in us both the good seed and the bad, a desire to do good and an inclination towards evil. Like the servants in the parabola, we would like to ask: "*Where does this come from?*" and the temptation is big to pull up the weeds immediately, to remove from among us and within us the traces of evil with the risk of mutilating ourselves.

What's in it for us today?

The end of the parabola helps us to better understand what patience is. The master's answer is twofold: on one hand, he explicitly confirms that evil doesn't come neither from man nor from God, since it is "the enemy the one who did it" ; on the other hand, he is proposing an amazing way of acting: "*Let them grow together*". It is a matter of respecting what has been sown and of trusting in time, which will gradually bring to maturity what must mature, while the spiritual fight has to be named.

Let's get back to Ignatius.

Through the issue of his studies and his prayer, Ignatius understands that the spiritual fight might be hidden under misleading (good) appearances! The adversary is clever and we have to resist his illusions and our spiritual greed which make us run away from our "duties of state" and is placing us in an urgency that does not come from God. Furthermore, his desire to pass on his knowledge & experience is huge and it is not easy for him to accept that the Church is preventing him from preaching, in order to protect himself and the others. It is all about entering into a slow and costly process of learning and obeying reality. The time of preaching has not yet come for him and patience is the only way to help him to last: he is not running a speed race but a long-distance one. There is a huge danger of going too fast and believing to be arrived without studying and others' help.

Through the intercession of Ignatius, I ask the Lord for the grace of patience, facing what I do not understand about the decisions of the authorities (religious or otherwise) and the grace of perseverance related to my "duties of state".

Points of reflection...

- What does this story inspire me? Does it echo a familiar situation that I have been through or witnessed?
- For a moment, I locate my places of impatience. With God, I contemplate them. If they distract me from reality, I ask the Lord to help me to live in them in a more just way.
- Through the intercession of Ignatius, I ask the Lord for the grace of patience in the face of what I do not understand about the decisions of the authorities (religious or otherwise) and the grace of perseverance in my "duties of state".

I can leave a note on the spiritual wall of the retreat

I prepare for this personal time of prayer:



- As I approach the place of prayer, I remember that I am going to spend a moment of intimacy with the Lord.
- I decide on a time for this prayer (15 minutes? 20 minutes?)
- I look for a space and a position that helps me to be present.
- I am silent, I turn off my mobile phone, I breathe slowly: my whole body calms down.
- I realise that I am entering the presence of the Lord. I look at him as he looks at me.
- After a sign of the cross, I ask the Holy Spirit to support me in listening to the Lord during the time of prayer. May everything that happens help me to find Jesus Christ, to know him better, to love him more and to follow him more closely.



BIBLICAL TEXT: Is 55, 10-11

Introduction

Isaiah reminds us that spiritual life requires time and patience. I stand before God with everything I am. I take a deep breath and ask the Lord to feed me with his Word.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Reference of the biblical passage

Today's reading is taken from chapter 55 of the book of the prophet Isaiah

Point 1

With a lot of strength and simplicity, the prophet Isaiah underlines the power of the Word of God which is in action throughout the world. I contemplate and I am amazed by the rain watering the earth, making plants sprout, filling the rivers and the groundwater tables, evaporating and forming the clouds. This is how the Word of God works in action.

Point 2

According to the prophet, God is the only source of seeds for the sower, the only source of bread for the one who must eat.

Meditating on my life, what is the seed I feel called to throw?

Which bread is feeding me, giving me life? Which activity, relationship, talent?

Yes, it all comes from God. I give thanks.

Point 3

Finally, the prophet emphasizes that the Word of God returns to God after having done its work in our life, our heart and our existence. Therefore, God does care about what He is giving to us. He desires to enjoy it in return, after we fully took benefits from it.

What do I feel invited to do?

Introduction to the second listening

Let us listen again to this beautiful passage from Isaiah.

Let the Word of God do its work in me.

Invitation to personal prayer

At the end of this prayer time, I turn to God, the Father of all life, who wants LIFE for me and never ceases to nourish me through his Word and through my brothers and sisters.

I address him in all simplicity, entrusting him with my desire of living on His Love and Life.

I can also entrust him with a desire that I have deep inside me, but that hasn't germinated yet.

Final prayer

Our Father...

At the end of the prayer

- I take a moment to look at the way it happened, to see if the setting was appropriate (place, time, duration etc.)
- I write down a fruit of the prayer in my notebook
- I can leave a note on the spiritual wall of the retreat

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