

THINK ON THESE THINGS.....

Reading: James 4:11-16

¹¹ Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. ¹² There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbour? ¹³ Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." ¹⁴ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil.

Reflection:

Whenever we do well in life, it can easily lead to a feeling of being in control. It can make it so much easier to look down on and judge others who maybe haven't achieved what we have. However, if we are honest, we have to admit that our achievements always come through many gifts of grace that we have received from others.

Perhaps we were born into a family with the resources to give us a safe and happy upbringing or maybe we were lucky enough to know someone who gave us a break in our career. We may well have been the recipients of unexpected kindness just when we've needed it. No one ever achieves anything in this life alone. We all need each other, which is why we need to learn to be a little less critical, and more gracious.

As we will note in our lectionary reading this coming Sunday, when we get addicted to our own superiority, we usually end up missing the new thing, the unexpected grace, the surprising opportunity when it arises - and it always does.

Walking the way of Jesus is about enjoying what we have received to the full, and then also celebrating when others are "blessed". It is about living with as much responsibility and discipline as we can, while also opening to God's grace and to unexpected gifts. And when this faithfulness and humility connect in our lives, we find a deeper peace, and a more gracious attitude to carry with us through our lives.

When we pray for those around us it is much harder to criticise them. Our prayers may even show us where God wants us to serve others in faithful humility, and this can lead us to actions that honour God and bring wholeness to others. Today, whenever you are tempted, for whatever reason, to look down on someone, take a moment to pray for them.

Breath - Prayer for Today: Dear Lord, As I pray for those around me, show me how to serve them in humble faithfulness to your grace.