

Wednesday Reflection

Title: More than our Duty

Date: October 5, 2025

ID: 27th Sunday of the Year (C cycle)

Scripture: Luke 17:5-10

References:

Joel B. Green. The Gospel of Luke. Eerdmans Publishing. 1997, pages 610-615.

Gerhard Lohfink. Jesus of Nazareth: What He Wanted, Who He Was. A Michael Glazier Book, Liturgical Press, 2012. See chapter 4 pages 59-71.

WR is Wednesday Reflection followed by the title found on this website.

All Scripture quotations are from the New American Bible revised edition (NABrev).

Text: Biblical chapter and verse numbers were fixed in the 13th and 16th Centuries, respectively.

I wonder whether they cause artificial readings, for instance, pausing at chapter transitions where the author did not intend a break. Today's reading (Luke 17:5-10) continues what came before.

Jesus imagined a great in-gathering of people, the inclusion of all humankind in one great banquet (Isaiah 25:6-9 [see Lofink]). What comes before Sunday's reading are necessary components of the in-gathering.

The first four verses of chapter 17 are not read on Sunday. They are teachings on discipleship. Joel Green writes that the instructions contrast followers of Jesus to the Pharisees. "Be on guard" (17:3a) means guarding against practicing the religion of Pharisees. The comparison is not to disparage actual Pharisees, but to warn Christians of false forms of faith. Jesus wants Christians to live a new way of life.

In 16:14, Jesus tells us that Pharisees are money lovers. In 17:1-2, the sin may be scandal caused by the money-loving disciples who refuse to cooperate with the great reversal (the rich and poor, the hungry and well-fed, the powerful and lowly changing places (see WR, *Who's At the Door*). The "little ones" (17:2). may be the poor, crippled, lame, and blind (see 14:11-12),

along with the lost son (see 15:11-52), and especially the poor at the gate (see 16:19-31). If the little ones are alienated from the church, the in-gathering fails.

In 17:3-4, disciples are instructed on reconciliation and forgiveness. The instruction is based on the evocative parables in chapter 15 (the lost sheep 15:1-7; the lost coin 15:8-10; and the lost son 15:11-31). The instruction contrasts the inclusionary faith Jesus envisioned with the more exclusionary religion of Pharisees who maintained purity regulations that separated people and excluded some from the synagogue. As with the great reversal, reconciliation is necessary to complete the Lord's vision.

Sunday's reading begins with 17:5. The first section is a call to action. Faith is a power or force. If the Lord's vision of an inclusive in-gathering of God's family is to be realized, the Lord's disciples will need supernatural help. Overcoming all that divides the human family is more than humans can accomplish on our own. The Lord's disciples ask for an increase of faith to participate in the Lord's vision.

The parable in 17:7-10 sounds harsh to us. The brutal treatment of slaves has been forgotten, purposefully by some. In the parable, a disciple is a servant. S/he would be an unprofitable disciple if s/he were concerned only for one's own salvation or one's personal religiosity. More is needed if we are true disciples. After all, disciples are forgiven sinners (17,1). Once reconciled, disciples are included in the great banquet. Our reconciliation inspires our ministry to reconcile others, to forgive, and include.

Jesus desires more! Recall how he invited us to be creative and cunning (16:1-8). We need creative ways to overcome divisions and to invite all people to the banquet.