

Perverse Freedom

2 Samuel 4:5-12

The Lord calls you into his presence today.

Are you standing strong this summer?

You are with David in his triumph. Despite the sins of his followers, David remains righteous toward his enemies. He becomes King over all of Israel and takes Jerusalem as his new capital.

Pray that the Lord draws you out of sloth to embrace the kingly mission he has given you. Pray for the grace of freedom and humility for all Exodus Men, just as they are praying for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord and Master of my life, spare me from the spirit of indifference, despair, lust for power, and idle chatter. Instead, bestow on me, your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, O Lord and King, let me see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed forever and ever. Amen.

A Reading from the Second Book of Samuel

Now the sons of Rimmon the Be-erothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out, and about the heat of the day they came to the house of Ish-bosheth, as he was taking his noonday rest. And behold, the doorkeeper of the house had been cleaning wheat, but she grew drowsy and slept; so Rechab and Baanah his brother slipped in. When they came into the house, as he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him. They took his head, and went by the way of the Arabah all night, and brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron. And they said to the king, "Here is the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life; the Lord has avenged my lord the king this day on Saul and on his offspring." But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Be-erothite, "As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my life out of every adversity, when one told me, 'Behold, Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and slew him at Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news. How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous man in his own house upon his bed, shall I not now require his blood at your hand, and destroy you from the earth?" And David commanded his young men, and they killed them, and cut off their hands and feet, and hanged them beside the pool at Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the tomb of Abner at Hebron.

Reflection

David is surrounded by so much brutality and provocation, but it is clear he is committed to peace. When people commit violence, he does not celebrate it but plans national days of remorse. He tries to redirect people to the honor of God. Once more, David has a firm grasp of the divine order and does not go forward without seeking the Lord in prayer.

The Church foresaw that modern discourse about human dignity and democratic society was lopsided in concentrating on rights without equal attention to responsibilities. The Church's concern about an imbalanced conversation of human rights was particularly well-expressed during the pontificate of St. John Paul II, who spoke of a "perverse notion of freedom." In his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, he wrote that our society has bought into a "notion of freedom which exalts the isolated individual in an absolute way and gives no place to solidarity, to openness to others and service of them." We think, in other words, that what it means to be free is to be absolutely liberated from all constraints, including the limitations that the lives of others place on us. This absurd notion of freedom, says St. John Paul II, is what led to abortion being deemed a human right. Indeed, in his disastrous judgment in *Planned Parenthood vs. Casey*, now-retired judge Anthony Kennedy asserted that "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." This is the modern notion of freedom, and it is absolutely perverse.

Author R.J. Snell points out that this notion of freedom causes us to reject "any construction of the world that demands respect or piety, that is 'thick' or full enough of meaning to demand our recognition and respect." [6] And when we abandon reality in search of freedom from it, we become slothful, for we must disconnect ourselves from everything that could be a constraint.

At the end of the day, it creates a society of sloths, a society of people unwilling to accept responsibility and offer themselves as gifts for others.

Do you believe in this "perverse notion of freedom" that asserts your rights but rejects your responsibilities? Talk with the Lord about this in prayer today.

Now place yourself before God, and converse with him.

Week 3 Action Items

Plan a summer BBQ.

Evaluate your Plan of Life.

Commit to intentional prayer time with others.