

Take Responsibility

2 Samuel 2:1-4

Today, listen to the voice of the Lord.

How is he calling you this summer?

You are with David, preparing for kingship. Like David, your nemesis the devil, has been defeated by the grace of God. Sloth is a kind of ambivalence about spiritual discipline and one's duties, while the remedy is a sharp conscience.

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

After this David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up." David said, "To which shall I go up?" And he said, "To Hebron." So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam of Jezreel, and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. And David brought up his men who were with him, every one with his household; and they dwelt in the towns of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

Reflection

In our reading, David asks the Lord whether it is time for him to go and be anointed king. He then embraces his vocation. David was a humble man who had the honor of God before him. This means at his best and humblest, he did nothing without seeking the Lord first. Yet, his humility did not keep him from acting. He did not agonize over whether he was really ready to be king. He was not paralyzed before the will of God. David knew that the Lord had called him, and so, while he sought the Lord's direction first, he embraced his responsibility.

True humility is not a despairing sense of unworthiness that prevents us from acting. David was humble. He first sought the Lord, but he did act. He did embrace the full meaning of his anointing. To receive God's blessings and anointing while being entirely passive is not humility, but sloth.

Remember your baptism. You were anointed, too. You participate in Christ's prophetic, priestly, and kingly office! The enemy desperately desires that you would be so grieved at your sin that you would forget God's mercy. The enemy wants to bring your unworthiness before you in such a way that you

feel like you cannot serve God. But that is not true humility.

True humility accepts God's mercy as firmly as it accepts God's justice. The slothful person, on the other hand, refuses God's mercy, preferring instead self-pity. This "woe is me" mentality becomes an excuse for refusing to grow in holiness. Properly understood, however, God's mercy energizes holiness, because it demonstrates the Lord's confidence that we are worthy and capable of holiness. We need to be like David, recognizing our need for the Lord, seeking him first, but also getting on with the work he has given to us.

What are you refusing to do for the Lord because you think you are too weak or incapable? Answer that question, then bring your answer before the Lord of mercy in prayer today.

Now place yourself before God, and converse with him.

Day 7 Action Item

Observe Saturday of Ember Week.

Today completes the three Ember Days of penance this week. The Ember Days mark the change of seasons, giving thanks to God and doing penance for sins. In this week following Pentecost, we thank the Lord for the blessings of this past spring and invoke his mercy upon the summer season. It is fitting, therefore, that we use them to kick off our Kings of Summer exercise. Coming out of the Easter season, these Ember Days refocus our attention on the ongoing need for penance and conversion. They point us to our reliance on God for everything and how we must empty ourselves of attachments to rely on him ever more fully. They also point us to the power of sacrifice to open our lives to God's grace and interior blessings. We pray for our spiritual leaders on these days, asking God to guide us through them. Sharing in Christ's kingly reign, we will do our part to support them through our prayer, sacrifice, and service.