

# Reflection for the 8th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle C

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The lectionary translation of the readings for this Sunday can be found at <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/030225.cfm>

## **1st Reading:** *Sirach 27:4–7*

The Book of Sirach is part of the wisdom tradition of Hebrew Scripture. Although it was originally written in Hebrew, it was not ancient enough (175 to 200 years before the birth of Christ) to be included in the Jewish canon. The wisdom books are often filled with aphorisms and that is what we get today. The wisdom of this section is kind of fun and easy to understand; be careful what you say and pay attention to what others are saying.

## **2nd Reading:** *1 Corinthians 15:54–58*

We continue in the 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians from which we have been reading for several weeks. In this selection, Paul is talking about the resurrection of the faithful at the end of the world. The meaning of his whole presentation is in the last sentence “Therefore, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

## **Gospel:** *Luke 6:39–45*

No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks. Lk 6:40, 45a

## **Gospel Reflection**

When I first came to California, I came without a job. I wanted to find a parish interested in Small Christian Communities so I wrote a proposal and sent it to as many pastors as I could identify. One of them actually contacted me back. He said he already had his deacon working on small communities but that he needed a business manager and he thought I could do the job.

I took that job and he and I became friends. He was also the major reason I went to the seminary and got ordained. Also, I joined one of the small communities in that parish. And, guess what... Dcn David and Dcn Joe (the deacons at the Cathedral where I am preaching this weekend) were also members of that small community. Yes, I've known them since the eighties.

At some point, when I was working on small community things a lady told me how impressed she was with me. She said most men weren't into personal growth. Of course she was wrong but I get how some people might think men are only into this-worldly growth and not spiritual growth. Oftentimes we men define ourselves by what we do rather than by what or who we are, so I can understand how someone might think we are not into personal growth.

This Gospel is about personal growth, though. It is about disciples focusing on what and who they are and who they are becoming. If you didn't miss it you heard that Jesus expects all of us disciples to

become guides, or leaders. He wants us to be well trained and he points out that it is good people who will be good guides/leaders. We need to work on personal growth so we can be those good people, constantly working on becoming better.

I think it's awesome that he wants us all to become guides and leaders of the way which he teaches. That's important to recognize; he wants us to become guides and leaders of the way which he teaches. We need to teach his wisdom, not our personal human wisdom. Parents do that in raising their children. Spouses and committed friends do that through their relationship with each other. We all do that in any situation where we are living the Christian life authentically; so it can be seen and noticed.

I think there is a problem though. It is too easy to focus on growth in this-worldly terms. We want to "do" life better so we sign up for programs that might help us be better salesmen, be more organized, be in better physical shape, be more rounded in scheduling our time... and so on. There must be hundreds of opportunities out there, and they are all good for what they are.

But, there is a program for internal growth, too. It's called discipleship. Discipleship means being a learner and being a follower of the way which Jesus taught, and still teaches through the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I'm not talking about following Church rules here. I'm talking about letting Jesus rule in our hearts and in our souls.

Sherry Weddell, an international religious educator, calls it a lived relationship with God. Her experience indicates that most active Catholics don't have that kind of relationship with the Lord. Maybe five percent do. She explains that she and her associates asked 1,600 parish leaders what percentage of their parish, do they think, have a lived relationship with the Lord. Five percent, more or less, was their answer. The rest are, maybe, seekers. That's not a bad thing but this Gospel is calling us to more.

My suggestion, for this week, is that we all ask ourselves if we are really intentional disciples, or not. If I tried to explain how to analyze that, I would need at least another hour. So, my recommendation is that this week we all look at the first of Sherry's two-episode YouTube discussion of the process of becoming an intentional disciple. You can find it at <https://youtu.be/RF9Amil5YVE?si=SXoFe2ePkbWAYDng> .

I pray that this will be a fruitful week for us all. God bless you...

### **Personal Reflection:**

No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks. Lk 6:40, 45a

### **Question:**

What words or phrases grabbed your attention during the Liturgy of the Word on Sunday? What connection do those words or phrases have to your day-to-day life? (Why do you think they grabbed your attention?) What might God be trying to say to you through these words or phrases? What response should you make? What action should you take?

### **Alternative:**

Think about/reflect upon a time when you experienced the Lord's presence in your life. If you have, is that a continuing experience? What is it like? (Be specific.) If you haven't experienced the Lord's presence, why do you think you haven't? What do you think you can do to open yourself to that kind of experience?

### **Verse by Verse:**

Lk 6:39 "And he told them a parable." | He is still speaking to his disciples. This is a continuation of his teaching in the Sermon on the Plain. This is not really a parable but a proverb and some versions translate it that way.

Lk 6:39b "Can a blind person guide a blind person?"; and, Lk 6:40b "When fully trained every disciple will be like his teacher." | Disciples are expected to learn and then become teachers too.

Lk 6:41-42 "Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own?" ff | On the way of discipleship, it is important to be self-critical and introspective.

Lk 6:43-45 "A good tree does not bear rotten fruit..." | AYBC states that this might be against false prophets and/or Pharisees like in Matthew's Gospel Mt 7:16-21 and Mt 12:33-35. In Luke has a much more universal application and it seems to me, in context, that it is an admonition to disciples to make sure they are good persons.