

6th Sun A... Attitudes

Introduction...

We come here today to encounter the Holy,

to be in our God's presence

and to let God's presence radiate within us.

We come here to sing with each other, our voices joined together...

to sing hymns to our God,

to speak our prayers,

to listen to God's Word

and hopefully a message from God to us...

we come to offer our lives to our loving Father together with Jesus,

to remember Christ's love for us, shed on the Cross,

and to be graced with Jesus' presence and Spirit

as sustenance for our journey this coming week.

Refrain... Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

I SS

Listen to the first lines of the first SS Reading from the Wisdom of Sirach:

If you choose you can keep the commandments.

They will save you... if you trust in God, you too shall live.

Listen to the opening lines of the second SS Reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians:

Brothers and Sisters: we speak a wisdom to those who are mature, not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away.

Rather, we speak God's wisdom.

What is this "wisdom of God" which we can trust?

Keep your eyes on Jesus... listen to his words... follow his actions.

Jesus is the wisdom of God come among us.

Refrain... Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

II A Broken World

Our world is broken... read today's newspaper or watch the News on TV.

There are many good and beautiful things about our world...

but there is much darkness also.

There are many good and beautiful qualities in each one of us... but there is also darkness.

In today's Gospel Jesus speaks about some of the darkness in each one of us

and gives us instructions on how to handle it...

Jesus brings us God's wisdom.

Let's take a look at some of this...

Anger...

Jesus instructs us to be very careful about anger.

What gets us angry at others?

Are we angry too often?

Do our impatient and angry reactions lead to lingering angry thoughts, which lead to angry words or gossip, which can lead to resentments and ongoing anger?

We live in an angry society with too much violence and rage.

How handle anger?

My wise mother used to say... "Count to ten."

Why do we get angry?

Do we expect that others will always pay attention to us or to our wise suggestions...

to our way of doing things... to our wise answers?

Is this a realistic or even a healthy expectation?

Good luck if we expect this to happen all of the time...

I have learned that *sometimes* others listen to us –
if we tell them what they want to hear.

Many more times they don't listen to us...

and we can't force them to.

Why get angry?

What does that change?

How does that help?

Or as Dr. Phil says, "How's that workin for ya?"

I know several people who have children or grandchildren who are addicted to alcohol or drugs.

This causes much consternation and heartache in the family... What good will anger do?

Will these addicted ones follow wise advice?

My suggestion is for the family to go to Alinon and listen to others who deal with similar situations...

Anger will not solve this kind of suffering and pain.

Easy does it... lift them up to God in prayer and trust that the Lord loves them and will deal with them.

And share with others who have similar experiences.

Don't try to bear it alone!

Lust...

Jesus instructs us that lustful actions spring from lustful thoughts. Lustful thoughts seem to be the background of much of our culture.

Our culture is over-sexualized.

We use sex to sell everything.

Porn is a two billion dollar a year industry...

and it's available in the comfort and privacy of your room on the Internet.

Porn can be very addictive.

It can color and even deeply wound a person's ability to relate to the people maturely.

For example, how many men see women as boy toys?

Women in our culture...

So much of our fashion industry teaches women that they have to package themselves as desirable commodities or they will never be noticed or loved.

Modesty... we don't even know what it means.

How much money gets spent on cosmetics and cosmetic surgery every year, so that one can be beautiful and noticed and loved?

Being beautiful is not bad...

Unless we think that physical beauty is the only beauty that counts and it's the only way we can be worthwhile...

Forgiveness/reconciliation...

Jesus teaches the importance of reconciling with those from whom we are estranged.

This is not always easily accomplished...

sometimes it's downright impossible.

But... do we harbor resentments and hold onto angry thoughts about others?

Do we treat others as enemies,
shunning them or gossiping about them... because they hurt us?
Forgiveness might simply be our asking God to change our hearts...
and praying for those whom we find it hard to forgive.
We don't have to become their best friend.
That might not be wise.

We *might* be estranged from them.
But we can still forgive them and pray for them.
We don't have to trust them or get back together with them.
But we can still forgive them and pray for them.

Jesus tells a number of stories about forgiveness.
At the heart of each story is the fact that as sons and daughters of God we
realize how much our loving God has forgiven us...
and we ask God's help to be forgiving people.
Remember Jesus words from the Cross...

Father forgive them, for they know not what they do...

Jesus didn't just talk the talk, he walked the walk.

Refrain... Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

III The Wisdom of God

Jesus came to heal a broken world.
Jesus brings the "wisdom of God,"
the dream of God for us... God's will for us.
Jesus teaches us and shows us how to live...

He leads the way.

Following Jesus is not just a matter of externally conforming to the commandments...

not committing adultery, not being lustful, no being angry, not stealing...

Following Jesus is an inside job...

Following Jesus is asking God to transform us inwardly into a forgiving, patient, respectful, kind and caring person... a virtuous person... a person of integrity.

Following Jesus means asking God to heal and transform our attitudes and interior dispositions... from angry to patient, from unforgiving to forgiving and from lustful to respectful and gracious.

Only God can do that for us. We need the very Spirit of Jesus to transform us...

Refrain... Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

Conclusion...

As we continue with this Mass we ask Jesus to come into our hearts and transform us...

to heal our brokenness, our angry dispositions, our unwillingness to forgive and any temptation to lustfulness.

We ask Jesus to transform us into patient, forgiving and gracious disciples, people of integrity and goodness.

Jesus, help us. Jesus heal us. Jesus strengthen us... Amen.