

ctkAlive! Scripture Study
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time
2022—C Cycle



Image Source:
[Words of Faith Hope Love](#)

Opening Prayer

(edited and abridged for use here)

Help Me To Be There

Holy, life-giving Spirit,
infuse in me your ability
to remain present to your people.
Help me to be there,
to be *right there*
for the people who need me.
There for young people,
there for the elderly,
there for the brokenhearted.
Fire my heart with your life-changing presence.
Even though I know you to be everywhere
and in everything,
give me the ability to be fully
in one place at a time...
open and ready to love.
Amen

Author unknown

Source: [JesuitResource.org](#)

Introduction to the 19th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament are all about *believing without seeing*. But in Hebrews 11: 1, we have the *only* biblical definition of what faith means: “Being **sure** of what we **hope for**, being **convinced** of what we **do not see**.” Wow! So countercultural. No wonder the number of Christ-followers are shrinking. Most of us are inclined to reword this into “being sure of what I see with my own eyes and convinced of what I have in my possession today.”

The Book of Wisdom marked the first effort to express Israel's faith and wisdom in Greek, at that time the world's "universal language." It revealed broader signs of Jewish adaptation to Greek culture. The book offered guidance to the major questions of evil, pain, and death. Wisdom showed God extending mercy to everyone without exception. The passage we read this week references events that took place during the Exodus from Egypt in the 13th century BC/BCE.

St. Luke offers us a parable/story of a master who left his property in the hands of his hired domestic workers. Often, as the saying goes, "When the cat's away the mice play." This time the workers proved diligent in completing their tasks and waited for their master's return. When he arrived home, he found everything in order and his staff ready to welcome him. His diligence so pleased him that he invited them to recline at table. He then put on an apron and became *their* servant. Sadly, that might rarely happen today in what we call "real life," but Jesus has vowed forever to be servant to those who serve him.

Scripture Readings

Wisdom 18: 6-9 "The holy race secretly offered the Passover sacrifice."

Psalms 33: 1, 12, 18-22 "The eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him."

Hebrews 11: 1-2, 8-19 "Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen."

Luke 12: 35-40 (Short Version) "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival."

A Reading from the Book of Wisdom (18: 6-9)

"That night had been foretold to our ancestors, and knowing in what promise they trusted, they could rejoice in all surety. Your people waited for both the salvation of the just and the downfall of their enemies, for the very punishment of our enemies brought glory to the people you have called—that is, to us. The holy race secretly offered the Passover sacrifice and agreed on this worthy pact: that they would share alike both blessings and dangers. And forthwith they began to sing the hymns of their fathers."

Personal Reflection

The unknown author of Wisdom cited the Exodus as a model for faithful Jews who had already emigrated and taken residence in all parts of the Greco-Roman world. Keep in mind that God chose Moses, a *murderer* on the lam. He returned to Egypt and stood up to Pharaoh, convincing him to release the Hebrews slaves from bondage. Observing the annual Passover feast became the central expression of their faith.

— *What central expression of my Christian faith binds me to fidelity with Christ?*

— *What similarities do I find between this reading about the challenges facing those expatriate Jews who left Israel... and my life today, living amid a mostly un-Christlike population?*

Responsorial: Psalm 33 (1, 12, 18-22)

A joyful Davidic song of thanksgiving to the Creator

Blessed are the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

You godly ones, shout for joy because of the Lord!
It is appropriate for the morally upright to offer him praise.
How blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom he has chosen to be his special possession.
Blessed are the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Look, the Lord takes notice of his loyal followers,
those who wait for him to demonstrate his faithfulness
by saving their lives from death
and sustaining them during times of famine.
Blessed are the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

We wait for the Lord;
he is our deliverer and shield.
For our hearts rejoice in him,
for we trust in his holy name.
May we experience your faithfulness, O Lord,
for we wait for you.
Blessed are the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

Personal Reflection

Perhaps from our cultural fear of “emotionalism,” clamorous expressions of joy seem suspect in the practice of what we call “mainstream” religion. But God gave us the power to shout as well as to whisper. After all, the cosmos belongs to God. So do the multiple nations on this planet. The chosen Jewish people belonged to God, as do people everywhere who revere their Lord. It would be unnatural if such a faith did not produce in us a joy that expresses itself humbly, yet triumphantly.

“How blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.”

— *As I view my cultural surroundings today, where do I find support for living a God-centered life? Who in particular has become a model for the kind of life I want to live?*

— *In my opinion, where does daily life in America stand on a scale of 1 to 10 as a “Christian nation”?*

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (11: 1-2, 8-19)

“Faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see. For by faith the people of old received God’s commendation.

“By faith... Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he would later receive as an inheritance, and he went without understanding where he was going.

“By faith... he lived as a foreigner in the promised land as though it were a foreign country, living in tents with [his son] Isaac and [grandson] Jacob, who were fellow heirs of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with firm foundations, whose architect and builder was God.

“By faith... even though Sarah herself was barren and he was too old, he received the ability to procreate, because he regarded the one who had given the promise to be trustworthy.

“So in fact, one man fathered children—and this one as good as dead—*like the number of stars in the sky and like the innumerable grains of sand on the seashore*. These all died in faith without receiving the things promised, but they saw them in the distance and welcomed them and acknowledged that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth.

“For those who speak in such a way make it clear they are seeking a homeland. In fact, if they had been thinking of the land that they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they aspire to a better land... a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

“By faith Abraham, when tested, offered up Isaac. He had received the promises, yet he was ready to offer up his *only* son. God had told him, ‘*Through Isaac descendants will carry on your name.*’”

Personal Reflection

Once considered to be the work of [Paul the Apostle](#), most biblical scholars today consider the author of Letter to the Hebrews to be the work of another Jewish Christian. Some traditions hold that the author may have been [Barnabas](#)... or another one of Paul’s associates. The letter dates from the latter half of the first century AD/CE.

The opening sentence offers the biblical examples of Abraham and Sarah, so old the text says that he was “as good as dead.” Abraham risked everything for his faith in the one God whom he called Jehovah. The letter defines faith as the “assurance of what we hope for, being convinced of what we cannot see.”

The examples of Abraham and Sarah show that faith cannot remain locked up within us as an intimate, personal conviction. Believing calls us to act according to our faith and make decisions inspired by that faith. To understand the obedience of Abraham we must acknowledge that he hoped in God against all rational hope.

— *What’s my main takeaway from this week’s reading from Hebrews?*

— *With what level of conviction can I say today that I don’t need to see... to believe?*

The Gospel According to Luke (12: 35-40)

“Get dressed for service and keep your lamps burning; be like people waiting for their master to come back from the wedding celebration, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. Blessed are those slaves whom their master finds alert when he returns! I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, have them take their place at the table, and will come and wait on them!” Even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night and finds them alert, blessed are those slaves!”

(then a shift)

“Understand this—if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

Personal Reflection

Like all of Jesus’ parables, we may find a number of ways to parse the parable about the grateful master who in turn serves his staff. Every homilist will have his or her own take on its meaning.

Two words in particular stand out: *alertness* and *activity*. Since most of us will be long dead when the awaited end-time arrives, Jesus calls us to take action in the “now.” Every day, he calls us to add another spiritual “brick” to our life structure as a Christian. Since Jesus addresses each of us individually in this parable, we have a right to know what’s in it for us. Let’s risk paraphrasing Jesus’ words: “Well, let me assure you, I will put on my work clothes and serve you with gratitude for your alertness and positive action on my behalf.”

Let’s face it. Every day, it’s Jesus who does most of the serving...not us. That’s just *who he is*; it’s *what he does*. Every day!

— *In my daily relationship with Jesus, am I the one demanding service... or the one asking how I can be of service?*

— *What adjustment(s) in my thoughts and behavior does this passage prompt me to make?*

For Inspirational Listening/Viewing

Listen

“[I Believe](#)” performed by [Andrea Bocelli](#) and [Katherine Jenkins](#)

Watch

A little boy asks Pope Francis: “[Is my dad in heaven?](#)” (5 min)

An intimate, touching encounter between Pope Francis and a little boy on the outskirts of Rome. The child wonders about the eternal fate of his deceased father who was not a “believer.”

Read

Essential Writings by [Carlo Carretto](#), a member of the [Little Brothers of Jesus](#), founded in 1933 in France by five men inspired by the life of [Charles de Foucauld](#).
“Carretto makes it look so natural to be a human being, to be a believer, and even to be a saint. He writes so simply and lovingly that one can almost avoid the rage of the prophet in the mind of the mystic, but not for long!” — [Richard Rohr](#), OFM

Journaling Prompts

Based on this weekend’s Scripture readings, what does the Risen Christ ask me to do TODAY regarding...

- (1) the quality of the love I bring to my personal relationships... and
- (2) my life as an emissary of Christ, committed to bringing God’s love to the people with whom I interact in person and on social media?

*Who needs to receive from me this week a moment of laughter and personal concern?
Why do I hesitate?*

In light of this weekend’s Scriptures, take time to write about events occurring in your life this week and what you see happening in the world.

Preview of Next Weekend’s Scriptures

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 38: 4-6, 8-10 “Jeremiah ought to be put to death.”

Psalms 40: 2-4, 18 “I have waited, waited for the Lord.”

Hebrews 12: 1-4 “Persevere in running the race that lies before us.”

Luke 12: 1-2, 49-53 “I have come to set the earth on fire!”

Closing Prayer

(adapted and abridged for use here)

Being Present

Always-present God,
help me to be present to all who need me.
Help me be present to those
I know too well to actually *see*...
and to those *unseen* strangers.
Give me the ability to model your attentive,
loving gaze when I view my world...
my family... and my friends,
who are first seen and loved by you.
Finally, mark my availability
with a desire to be like your Son:
open... to loving,
open... to being loved,
open... to being sent,
open... to becoming love in the world.

Author unknown Source: JesuitResource.org

Gender usage in these reflections: We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection.

The Sunday readings are from the New English Translation (NET)
Questions and Commentaries © 2022 by [Alfred J. Garrotto](#)