

Let's see what God's Word has for us today.

Today's scripture begins with: IF YOU CHOOSE.

It is our choice. Decisions, decisions. Life seems to present opportunities to make decisions everyday. Sometimes I wish that there were no decisions to make and we can just follow orders. People that are in the military just have to follow orders and look at those days as happy days. "Just tell me what to do and I will do it" they say.

**We must not be deceived; we live with our decisions.**

The scripture goes on to say that if we choose to keep God's commandments, they will save us. When Moses gave the people God's commands they looked on them as a gift of God's love and concern for them. **God has shone us the way we are to go.**

And Sirach continues to discuss **the WISDOM OF THE LORD.**

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians speaks of God's wisdom as hidden and mysterious.

**Isaiah 55 tells us that God's ways are not our ways.**

Isaiah 43:25 says: It is I, I, who wipe out,  
for my own sake, your offenses;  
your sins I remember no more.

We say: I'll forgive but I'll never forget.

Jesus tells us to **turn the other cheek** when you are struck, but we say **I'll get you back.**

**WWJD: What would Jesus do is usually not what we choose to do.**

We don't set out in the day and plan these situations. They just seem to happen.

They must happen for a reason. Maybe they happen so that we can come to an understanding of the wisdom of God. Like the wisdom of the man who leaves to make amends with his brother and then returns to leave his gift at God's altar.

Let me share a story from my past:

It must have been 6 months after my CRHP weekend.

I was a new Christian, reading the scriptures everyday to understand God's way.

I lived in the town of North Canton, Ohio and I was 30 yrs old with 3 daughters and a lovely wife. I was very happy and content to follow God's path for my life.

I had a neighbor, next door whose name was Dick and we were good buddies. We followed Ohio State football and Cleveland Indians baseball. We had a neighbor that lived directly across the street from Dick, whose name was Burt. I didn't have much to do

with Burt but Dick had a negative relationship with him that went back years. I was sort of the new neighbor. The only thing I knew was that Burt parked his big RV right next to his house and it stuck out in front. I normally parked my cars in the garage except on this particular day; I parked my car on the street in front of Dick's house and across from Burt's house. I don't remember why. There must have been cars in my driveway when I parked and I just left it there overnight. Well it was a Sunday morning and I was on my way to Mass. I just got into my car when I see Burt running toward me. I roll down the window and Burt is screaming at me because I had parked my car in front of his house.

Well I am a new Christian and I am going love this guy no matter what. I tried explaining to him that I am not a regular offender of the neighborhood parking rules and this was a one-time offense. In the process of my explanation I mentioned the fact that his RV is always in my eye's sight and that he should be concerned about the blank in his eye rather than the toothpick in mine. He proceeded to call me a young (7 letter word) and I started my car (since I didn't want to be late for Mass) and said that he was full of (a 4 letter word) and drove off. I get to Mass and guess what Gospel they read? Well the only part I remember hearing is:

“...if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, LEAVE YOUR GIFT THERE AT THE ALTAR, GO FIRST AND BE RECONCILED WITH YOUR BROTHER, AND THEN COME AND OFFER YOUR GIFT.”

My prayer began anew. Please Lord don't tell me what you are telling me. He parks his RV there 365 days in the year. His answer was: yes Tony but you said he was full of that 4 letter word. All I could say was yes Lord, I will be right back. I proceeded to Burt's house in the hope of getting this over with. Well he wasn't there and so it is going to be prolonged. As I am walking across the street, Dick comes out and asked me what all the yelling was about an hour ago. When I told him, he agreed with me 100%. But when I told him that I was going to apologize to Burt, he told me that he would never apologize to Burt and that I should not apologize either. I considered Dick a wise man but not as wise as God. I took about 3 days to finally catch Burt at home and I apologized for saying that he was full of it.

But this is where God showed me His infinite wisdom. Burt proceeded to share his faith history with me and we talked for a long time. I was moved by his story and came away seeing Burt with God's eyes and a better understanding of Matthew 5.

It doesn't end there. In preparing for this homily in prayer, God showed me another person that I needed to make amends with. As soon as the Lord opened my eyes, I went and shared what a prideful person I was in my relationship with him. And the same thing happened; he shared with me a little bit about his faith journey and I came away with new insights as to why we were not connecting. I saw anew why Our Lord wants us not to build up opportunities for grudges to grip our hearts. He wants us to be free from the devil's grip and to be sure to tell our brothers and sisters that they are **FULL OF LOVE**.