

READING I

1 SAMUEL 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

In those days, Saul went down to the desert of Ziph with three thousand picked men of Israel, to search for David in the desert of Ziph. So David and Abishai went among Saul's soldiers by night and found Saul lying asleep within the barricade, with his spear thrust into the ground at his head and Abner and his men sleeping around him.

Abishai whispered to David: "God has delivered your enemy into your grasp this day. Let me nail him to the ground with one thrust on the spear; I will not need a second thrust!" But David said to Abishai, "Do not harm him, for who can lay hands on the LORD's anointed and remain unpunished?" So David took the spear and the water jug from their place at Saul's head, and they got away without anyone's seeing or knowing or awakening. All remained asleep, because the LORD had put them into a deep slumber.

Going across to an opposite slope, David stood on a remote hilltop at a great distance from Abner, son of Ner, and the troops. He said: "Here is the king's spear. Let an attendant come over to get it. The LORD will reward each man for his justice and faithfulness. Today, though the LORD delivered you into my grasp, I would not harm the LORD's anointed."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13 (8a)

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
all my being, bless his holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
forget not all his benefits. R.

He pardons all your iniquities,
heals all your ills.

He redeems your life from destruction,
crowns you with kindness
and compassion. R.

Merciful and gracious is the LORD,
slow to anger, and abounding in kindness.
Not according to our sins does he deal with us,
nor does he requite us according to
our crimes. R.

As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he put our transgressions from us.
As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who
fear him. R.

READING II 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

Brothers and sisters: It is written, *The first man, Adam, became a living being*, the last Adam a life-giving spirit. But the spiritual was not first; rather the natural and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven. As was the earthly one, so also are the earthly, and as is the heavenly one, so also are the heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one.

GOSPEL Luke 6:27-38

Jesus said to his disciples: "To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and

you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

Practice of Charity

In today's familiar Gospel, Jesus imparts to his disciples, and all of us, a rule of conduct sometimes called the golden rule: “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31). Societies are structured to preserve secular justice, while Jesus instructs us to seek spiritual justice. ♦ Learn about the restorative justice approach to resolving conflict and harm done between individuals. Are there elements of the process that you could adopt in your life? ♦ A practice proven to foster forgiveness for someone who has hurt you is to pray for them daily. Stay faithful to the habit and take note of how God transforms your heart. ♦ Follow the Lord's example and embrace the virtue of mercy. Feed the hungry. Clothe the homeless. Visit the imprisoned. It is hard to hold on to judgment for those for whom you perform a work of mercy.

Download more questions and activities for families, Christian initiation groups, and other adult groups at <https://www.ltp.org/ahw>.

Scripture Insights

This Sunday's Gospel reading provides another example of Luke's theme of the great reversal. Humanity has created a world that is the opposite of what God intended, and now God is acting through Christ and the Spirit to set things right.

Sin tells us that we are alone, and that we must struggle to get and keep what is ours. Christ tells us that we are loved by the creator of all things, who pours out abundance upon us. Sin tells us that the world is filled with enemies, and that we must remain vigilant not to fall into their hands. Christ reminds us that God created each person with gifts that, when used in love, will draw all others closer to eternity. In today's Gospel reading, we see Jesus practicing radical trust in God by placing his faith before the safety of his goods or even his person.

This radical trust, and the mercy that extends from it, had a long pedigree in Israel. As St. Paul implies in his distinction between natural and spiritual beings, mercy was long foreshadowed in Israel's Scriptures. In today's first reading, for example, David refrains from harming his enemy Saul, and instead trusts God to find a just resolution to their conflict. David did so, not because of a general stance on mercy, but because Saul was the divinely anointed king of Israel. Nonetheless, David's act shows a profound personal trust in God. David's descendant, Jesus, will extend this trust to every act of his life and ministry, and in doing so will reveal that mercy is the essence of God's call. Those who wish to be children of God must trust with the same zeal, learning how to set aside the lessons of the world and live according to the insights of God.

- ♦ How have you gone the extra mile for someone who did not deserve it?
- ♦ How have you been merciful to the “ungrateful and the wicked”?
- ♦ How can you replace habits of judgment with a spirit of generosity?