

PASTOR'S PRAYER AND SERMON

Please note that the following are the pastor's notes for his sermon and may therefore have some grammatical or spelling errors, etc.

Second Sunday of Pentecost

Fully Rely On God

"Mentoring to the Mission"

June 26, 2022

2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14; Psalms 77:1-2, 11-20;

Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62

Grace and peace to you, my friends!

Welcome to the second part of our new sermon series called "FROG: Fully Rely on God." Today we will talk about how important it is to have a mentor to guide us in our life of faith; as a way to grow spiritually.

Have you ever had a mentor?

Former Apple CEO Steve Jobs is said to have mentored Facebook CEO, Mark Zuckerberg. The two developed a relationship in the early days of Facebook. They often met to discuss the company's best business and management practices. When Jobs passed away in 2011, Zuckerberg posted on his Facebook page: "Steve, thank you for being a mentor and a friend. Thank you

for showing that what you build can change the world. I will miss you."

We usually find mentors in our jobs when we start to develop a work that is new to us. So, the institution where we work assigns us a mentor to walk us through the adaptation process before we can fully assume the responsibilities ourselves.

But we also have mentors in our spiritual lives. If you attended a confirmation class, you probably were assigned one mentor or chose someone close to you. These are not necessarily pastors; or leaders of the congregation. But they are people whose life of faith is an example to follow for others.

I always remember my great friend and colleague Steve Livermore, who was my mentor in my time preparing for my ordination. I learned much from his wisdom, advice, correction, and human quality. But above all, I realized that even as pastors, we need to have someone to advise us, guide us, and be our mentor.

You may say, but do pastors need mentors?

Let me say yes! We need accompaniment not only from prayers but also from mentors, counselors, and spiritual directors. Because the pastoral work is often arduous and tiring. These people help us cope with many things

in our ministry; they listen to and sustain us with their advice, direction, and prayers.

Remember that there is no room for lone rangers in the Church. Church life is a community, learning together. It is personal and collective growth.

This mentoring theme is exactly what our biblical text is about today. Last Sunday, we talked about the life of the prophet Elijah; how God took him out of his time of uncertainty when he allowed himself to die. However, God sustained and provided him with what was needed to continue the journey. God fed him and raised him. Elijah fully relied on God; and continued with the mission entrusted to him.

In our biblical text today, Elijah himself is the one who becomes a mentor. Perhaps not with the formality we describe in our times, but the task that Elijah carried out with Elisha had that feeling and type of work and mission.

Elijah just heard the news: King Ahab had died. We imagine the old prophet combing his fingers through his beard as he thinks of all the times he has faced that wicked king. How much has Elijah had to put up with! On many occasions, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel threatened, persecuted, and even tried to kill him. It's more. King Ahab did nothing to stop his wife Jezebel

from giving orders to kill many of Jehovah's prophets. Because of that, Elijah proclaimed a message of condemnation from Jehovah against King Ahab and his descendants. Now, God's words have come true. Ahab has died just as Jehovah had foretold (1 Kings 22); Elijah is tired. He is an old man without much physical strength to continue the task. Elijah knows that he must continue to hold on. Jezebel is still alive, and her terrible influence corrupts her family and people. Indeed, other challenges await Elijah, too; he has much to teach his mentee Elisha, his partner, and his successor before he leaves.

This new prophet needed Elijah's mentoring. This new prophet needed Elijah's spiritual advice. He needed the experiences of faith lived by this old and tired prophet. Elisha required wise words from someone who had already had to live difficult experiences during the challenges of a kingdom. That kingdom had decided to worship idols and not the one true God.

Do you realize the importance of a mentor in our Christian life?

Think of that person If you had a mentor or someone who has accompanied you on your life journey.

How has this person helped you in your spiritual life? How has he advised you in other matters? Do you feel that this person has been a blessing to you?

Now, if you don't have a spiritual mentor, let me tell you that no matter how old you are, there is always an opportunity to receive direction and guidance from someone else. Or even you can mentor someone in need.

Friends, let me repeat it again; the life of the Christian is not isolated from others; It is a life that is walked together in community. There is a beautiful word in Africa called "Ubuntu." This means "I am because we are" (also "I am because you are"). Do you see? God created us to learn from each other, and this is what Elijah is doing with Elisha; teaching and learning from each other.

A few Sundays ago, we celebrated the day of Pentecost. That day we remembered the birth of the Church as the Body of Christ. Before this Pentecost episode, Jesus told his disciples: "I Have Said before Things to You While I Am Still with You. But the Advocate, The Holy Spirit, Whom The Father Will Send in My Name, Will Teach You Everything and Remind You of All That I Have Said To You. " [John 14:25-26]

Do you realize? Even the Church, the Body of Christ, received the Holy Spirit as guide and comforter. That Spirit shows us the path we must follow; to do the will of God. But this only happens when you rely on God with all your being. The Holy Spirit mentors us in our journey of faith.

God wants us to be both hearers of his Word and doers of it. A Christian mentor listens to the Word and guides and allows others to develop in their spiritual life. This is not a matter of self-centeredness on the part of the mentor. Everyone who serves must recognize that he does so for the glory of God.

The joy, the most excellent satisfaction that you will have, is to form someone in the spiritual world. It is to take someone who is not and take him to be. It is to take someone and take him to a new place of revelation and spiritual life.

You can experience great joy and satisfaction knowing that you have helped someone grow in their spiritual journey. To know that your life made a difference in the life of another person. To know that God used your life's experience as a witness to others, that encouraged and inspired them to grow in their own personal and spiritual life.

The old prophet Elijah seemed to test the devotion of the new prophet Elisha. As it was known that Elijah would soon go to heaven in an unusual way, Elisha did not want to waste time and tried to stay as close as possible to his mentor. Both relied on God. One in his role as a mentor and the other one as a mentee.

One of the most beautiful moments of this passage is when Elisha takes up the mantle from the great prophet Elijah, who is taken up into heaven. Elijah not only gave Elisha's mantle. But with this act, the old prophet and mentor was saying; Just as God held me during all these years of ministry, God will keep you during yours, Elisha. Trust in God.

God allows each one of us to be able to have the blessing of leading others to faith. Perhaps not with the formality of a mentor or a prophet like Elijah. But with the confidence that God guides us in our task when we rely on God and not on our human efforts.

Rely on God! And be mentored by others. Because God put us in this world to learn from each other and serve others.

Rely on God! And consider that God can call you to mentor others. Amen.

THE PASTORAL PRAYER

Beloved God, Guide of our lives; we pray to you. We pray to you because we depend entirely on your grace and mercy.

We pray to you because we know that we are beings in need of your constant guidance. The guidance we receive from you through others around us.

We are grateful for those you have put in our path. For all those from whom we have learned in our life of faith. Some of them with wise words, others with silent and fervent prayers.

Challenge us, oh God! Challenge us to rely on you! Challenge us to always be ready to listen to your guidance through others. But also challenge us to help others grow in your Word.

You, O God, have invited us to live in a community. You have challenged us so that we can be One in You despite our differences.

You do not call us to be Christians isolated from the reality of the other. Instead, you call us to be vigilant in guiding others and guided by others.

Fill us with your Spirit; Oh God.... so that at some point in our lives, we will also be able to pass the mantle on to those who come after us.

Give us a second portion of your Spirit... so we can continually rely on you, just as the disciples of your Son Jesus Christ did when He taught them to pray, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.