



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Gospel Matthew 7: 21-9.

Jesus said to his disciples: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?' Then I will declare to them solemnly, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.'" "Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined." When Jesus finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Introductory Prayer:

Lord, before I can produce anything lasting in my life, I need to be united to you in prayer. Aware of my weakness and inclination to sin, I trust all the more in your forgiveness and mercy. I believe in your presence in the Eucharist. It gives me the assurances that you really are with your Church until the end of time.

Petition:

Lord, help me to improve one point of my life that has been neglected.

1. Lord, Lord:

"Faith without works is useless" (James 2:20). Witnessing to our faith through our works is crucial. It's not enough to go to Mass on Sunday, to have the Bible on the shelf, to hang a rosary on the rearview mirror. Faith in Christ means daily conversion, changing our lives in conformity to his will. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Doing the will of the Father means works of charity, of patience, of disinterested service. Real expressions of our faith demand that we give of ourselves.

Real faith doesn't leave us feeling smug. Do I ever feel self-righteous because "I'm with the Pope"? Because I "never got caught" doing something wrong? Does my faith in Christ leave me complacent? Or does it drive me to works of charity?

2. Rock Solid:

Listening to and following Christ means living as we should. There is a truth about our being human that demands a response. To know, love and serve God in this world, and to be happy with him forever in the next, sums up the purpose of our lives (see Catechism, No. 1). When we sin, we break not only with Christ but with ourselves. We feel divided interiorly by our passions, our anger, our vanity, our greed. Christ invites us to "come home," to be what we were meant to be. That is the surest foundation we can have when a crisis strikes. Where am I "building on sand"? Is my prayer life weak? Am I stingy with my possessions? Hardhearted toward a family member?

3. Façade:

We can surmise that the house built on sand looked sturdy -- that is why no one thought to test its strength before the big storm arrived. Our lives can be the same way. In a time of calm everything seems OK. No cares, no fears. Everything looks good on the outside, like those old Hollywood movie sets: all façade, but no depth. Beneath the surface, however, there might lie decay, chronic problems, issues that aren't resolved, emptiness -- all because Christ isn't the center of our lives. Are there areas of my life where I'm living superficially? Am I just putting up appearances for the neighbors? My parents? My spouse? My sweetheart? My pastor? What problems do I need to weed out of my life?

Conversation with Christ:

Lord, you love me too much to stand by and let me live my life on the surface. You know it is difficult for me to give up my mask, because it is never easy for me to face my weaknesses. Give me the strength to confront what I need to change in my life.

Resolution:

I will note one area where I'm not living up to the public image I present. Then I will offer up a decade of the rosary to overcome that vice or weakness.