

Lent Day 22

Saturday March 25, 2017

Reading: Romans 9:19-29

22 What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? 23 What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory — 24 even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

Reflection

By all rights I shouldn't be married right now. For years I broke my vows to my wife and my children. No, I didn't have a sexual affair. Instead, I lied to my wife for years — I had, basically, a second life at work. I lacked integrity. Sarah had asked me to quit smoking prior to our getting married, I agreed, I found I couldn't do it, but instead of owning up to my failure, I lied. We went through a pattern of my lying, my getting caught, my promising, my failing, and my lying again.

I remember the day I knew I was going to lose my family over this stupid habit and my own desire to keep it. I realized I wanted my family more than I wanted the habit, but I also knew I was powerless to let it go, so I prayed. In that moment I knew I was done with the habit, but I also knew I had to tell Sarah all the lying I had done and that by all rights, she could ask me to leave. After all I had failed to keep my vows. But, instead, Sarah made me an object of mercy rather than of wrath. She forgave me and reaffirmed me as her husband.

Paul is describing the same thing in this passage. If all the world has fallen short of the glory of God (and they have) then God's wrath is rightly over all people. In short, we are the objects of God's wrath. However, like Sarah, God extends grace instead of wrath, making us objects of mercy. We were prepared for destruction, but received his glory. Also like Sarah reaffirming me, God reaffirms us as his children; his good creation.

This is why we don't need to fear turning to God. Our fear would be that we would confess to God how we have failed expecting him to say, that's right now be destroyed! But, instead, he says, that's right now be restored. Sarah's grace was powerful for me, but what it really did was point to God's immense mercy for all of his creation.

Prayer

Great Potter, thank you for treating us with mercy when we deserve destruction. Thank you for your remaking your vessels as objects of your glory. Amen.