

Homily for the 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The first principle of psychology is that each one of us sees life from our own perspective. Each of you is looking at me as I preach. Yet each of you sees me differently.

The capacity to look at life from our own individual perspective plays out in countless ways. How many times have we looked at a couple and mused: “What does she see in him?” or “in her?” How often have we criticized another person’s taste or style. There are countless examples in this first principle of psychology. We see things from our own perspective. From a counseling perspective what matters is not the facts of any situation but the point of view of the person trying to deal with those facts.

While this first principle of psychology is unquestionably true, it can become a trap. For if **our** perspective becomes the only point of view with which we gaze upon the world...when we believe that what we see, what we experience and what we feel are the only legitimate perspectives, then we can become trapped in a mire of selfishness.

This is the heart of today’s Gospel. We are all familiar with the story of the master of the house who hires one group at the dawn of the day, another at mid-morning, a third a noon and a final group in mid-

afternoon. They all get paid the same...those hired at 3:00 PM are paid the same as those hired at 9:00 AM. Those hired early are angered that those hired late enjoy the master's generosity even though they worked but a brief period of time.

From the perspective of the persons hired at 9:00, they may have a point. But whose point is it? The master gave them exactly what he said he would. What he does with others doesn't concern those hired at the beginning of the day. What gets in the way is that those hired early have a bone to pick because, according to their personal perspective, they have been cheated. They should have received more.

The point of this Gospel story is that God acts in the way that God wants to. God isn't dependent on our perspective of what is owed to us and what is just. Rather God's point of view is one of generous love and total compassion. That's the key...God loves each one of us. God doesn't treat us by our standards. We are treated by God's standard...God's point of view.

Can you imagine what it would be like if we could make God's point of view our own? Is the kingdom of God just a dream? It all depends on your point of view.