Advent 1 B

MDP of God

I remember when I was a little boy in school—I think I was in 2nd grade---and in religion class we were talking about the prophets

And the nun who was teaching said how the prophets tried to warn people how they needed to repent—they needed to turn back to God---they needed to turn away from sin---*but the people refused to listen*

They kept on ignoring God—ignoring His prophets—ignoring His call to repent to embrace holiness

I remember in my wisdom as a 2nd grader thinking----*well that wouldn’t happen today*---**because we’ve been warned---we know better now**

*Evidently*---**I wasn’t very smart in 2nd grade**---because I was obviously wrong

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I want you to listen to the Prophet Isaiah---he’s warning the people:-- listen to his words from today’s 1st reading

Why do you let us wander, O LORD, from your ways,
and harden our hearts so that we fear you not?

Behold, you are angry, and we are sinful;
all of us have become like unclean people,
all our good deeds are like polluted rags;
we have all withered like leaves,
and our guilt carries us away like the wind.
There is none who calls upon your name,
who rouses himself to cling to you;
for you have hidden your face from us
and have delivered us up to our guilt.

Isaiah is pondering here one of the great mysteries of life--- **God**—*if you love us so much*---**why do you let us wander from you?**

 Why do you let us ignore your Wisdom?

 Why do you let us do things our way rather than your way?

And Isaiah is getting to the point—when we ignore God and His Wisdom---*it always ends up in a disaster for us***---so God why do you let us ignore you?**

And the answer of course—is because God gives us freedom---He wants us to love Him---but we can’t really love Him if we’re not free

Just like our 1st parents in the Garden---they could live by the Wisdom of God—*or they could follow their own inclinations*

If they were to freely love God—they had to be able to turn their back on Him in sin---*which of course is exactly what they did*

 *But without freedom*---**they couldn’t love Him**

And Isaiah is pointing out here---God we’re doing the same thing---we’re turning our backs on you God—we’re ignoring your Wisdom God--- we’re choosing to love the world more than we love you

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And my friends--- that gets us to the heart of the purpose of our lives---we’re to love God

 We’re called to live by the Wisdom of God

 We’re called to trust in God’s providence for us

 In short—we’re called to live in the Divine Will

The spiritual writer Daniel O’Connor in the book *The Crown of History*---points out *that only one will can rule any soul*

 Either God’s Will is going to rule our lives

 *Or our own will*—is going to rule our lives

If we’re to find true peace—if we’re to move forward with confidence—if we are to live with joy *in all the circumstances of our lives*---we need to allow the Will of God to rule our lives

 How does that work?

Well you and I are wired for faith---we’re made for God---our deepest desire whether we recognize it or not---is for God

 Satan sometimes twist those desires---but ultimately our desire is for God

So for instance---all beauty resides in God and flows from God

So every human has a deep desire for beauty---because *ultimate beauty* is found in God

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But Satan can turn that desire we have for beauty—and get us to focus on human beauty---where we can be fixated so much on human beauty---*it overshadows in our minds and hearts-*--**the beauty of God**

All perfection resides in God and flows from God

 So we have a deep deep desire for perfection

But again Satan—can get our attention off of ultimate perfection (God)---and get us to focus on what appears to be human perfection—*or near human perfection*---and we can focus so much on human perfection---that it overshadows in our minds and hearts---the ultimate perfection in God

 *So we focus on the creature rather than the Creator*

Ultimate power resides in God---*He said the Word and the entire physical universe appeared---that is unparalleled power*

We desire power---because our ultimate desire is for God who is all powerful

But again—Satan can get us to focus on desiring power for ourselves---rather than trusting the power of God

Or Satan can get us to focus on attaching ourselves to other people we see as powerful---and get us so intent on that---*that we lose sight of the all-powerful God*

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So our deepest desires are for God—For His beauty—His perfection—His power

Satan can distract us and get us away from God by getting us to focus on human beauty—human perfection—human power

*And we can get so distracted by that*---**that we end up ignoring God**—turning our backs on God--- rejecting the Wisdom of God

That’s what happened to the people of Israel---that’s what Isaiah is bemoaning

 And that is certainly a danger for every generation

And the key to having those desires for God---*focused where they’re meant to be*---**focused on God Himself**---*is for us to live in the Will of God*

 Because than we can live in peace---in joy—with confidence

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How does that work?

Well—when we live in the Will of God---we’re going to seek to give God glory

And we can give God glory if we have good health---but we can give God glory in poor health

We can give God glory if we’re rich---we can also give God glory is we’re poor as can be

We can give God glory if in the view of the world we’re great successes---we can also if God glory if in the eyes of the world we’re utter failures

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You see the things people so often make a big deal about—*from heaven’s point of view are just raw material*---*no matter what the circumstances of our lives*---**we can glorify God---we can live in His Will**

 And that’s all that matters in the end

Another example of this---most of us have an idea how we want things to go in our country

If we’re living in the Will of God---no matter what direction the country goes---*we know that God is going to work out His Divine plan*---**even if the country is moving in what we consider the wrong direction**

But when we’re living in the Will of God---*we know that He’s going to make all things work out right in the end for those who love Him*

And by working out right in the end—I mean that those who live in His Will are going to go to heaven and live in glory for all eternity

And I can’t help but think my friends—that there is so much division and hatred in our country today *because many are not living in God’s Will*

Many people have the attitude---if things aren’t working out “*like I want it to work out”*---**well they end up hating people they think are leading us in the wrong direction**

God doesn’t want us to hate people—He wants us to love people—He wants us to pray for people we view as enemies---to even love and pray for our persecutors

When we’re living in our will rather than by God’s will---when we view things as going in the wrong direction---we’re not going to be at peace---*instead we’re going to be filled with turmoil*—we’re going to be angry and bitter and resentful

When we’re living in our own will rather than by God’s Will---we can’t move forward with confidence

We’re going to be living in fear that everything is going wrong—everything is going to fall apart---everything is lost

But when we live in God’s Will---we know that no matter what happens God can work our eternal good from it

*Now don’t get me wrong*---we can and should be working to make our country the best it can be---what we shouldn’t do however—*is to get so caught up in what we want*---that we end up hating others—or living in fear—or living with resentment

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When you look at the bible—we see God’s chosen people were destroyed at various times by other nations---*things didn’t go like the people wanted it to go*

But even in the midst of that destruction---the people living in the Will of God could move forward with confidence---because God was going to make all things work out right in the end for those who love Him

But why would God have allowed His people to be destroyed?

Because He loved them too much to continue to ignore His Wisdom and to teach their kids to ignore His Wisdom

He loved them too much to allow things to go well for them here and now---*when their decisions and hard-heartedness was leading them away from eternal life with Him*

So to open their eyes—to give them opportunities for them to repent—to give them the chance to get off the wrong road and onto the right road---God in His love allowed His earthly Kingdom to suffer devastating losses---so that the most people possible could repent and be saved

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Again my friends—when we live in the Will of God---everything looks different than when we don’t live in the Will of God

 That’s why Jesus is telling us in today’s gospel **to watch**

To seek day by day seek to live in His Will--- day by day trust in His Will--- day by day to live with Him as the Lord of our lives

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It’s important to understand-some people may think they are already doing God’s Will

But doing it and living in it are two different things. *There is a big difference.*

When you live in His Will you live in the present moment constantly bringing God into every choice and every minute of your day.

**Thus making your day into a prayer.** You are conscious of sinning against God and you are able to re-align yourself with His Will over and over because you know when you’re not in it.

Jesus told Blessed Luisa Piccarreta that he did have a human will and that He wants our wills little   not annihilated.  Active, not passive. But aligned with His Will

My friends--the bible over and over assures us---when we live in the Will of God we can go forward with confidence no matter what the circumstances of our lives

 We can live in peace no matter what we might be facing

We can move forward with joy no matter what struggles we might have---because when we’re living in His Will we know that He will ultimately make all things work out right for those who love Him

Amen? Amen