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# MDP of God

We could call today “boy scout Sunday”—because the theme is “**Be prepared”**

Our readings today are all giving us important insights into God’s plan to save us – and by that I mean- how God prepares us so that we can enter into heaven – *and since that really beats the alternative*, I think we do well to reflect on that—*so we can be prepared*

So what I really want to do today a little mini bible study to give insight into God’s plan in saving us

Our 1st reading today is from the Book of Wisdom (Wisdom 18:6-9) – which is one of the newest books of the Old Testament

It’s one of the seven books that Protestants have deleted from their bible

But the last seven books of the Old Testament were really helping to prepare the Jewish people for the coming of the Savior – *for the coming of Jesus*- they were really like the bridge between the two Testaments or covenants

And in this reading it speaks of the people putting their faith in the **oaths---** and that’s what leads them to salvation

You need to understand that the whole bible is about covenants- a covenant is a sacred family bond

And throughout the bible we see God establishing covenants with various people

*But the way you established a covenant was by swearing an oath*

By swearing an oath you entered into a sacred family bond with someone – throughout the bible- *oaths are sworn so that God and His people enter into a family bond*

And the way you said you were going to enter into a family bond – the way you said you were going to swear an oath was with the number 7 – IT was literally “*I* ***will seven*** *myself too you”*

# That’s why in the bible we see seven over and over and over again- throughout the bible we see God saying through the number 7 “*I want you to be my family – I want you to be my children*”

In creation we’re told that God created in *seven days*- now in our day and age we argue and debate and question whether that was seven literal days – *but for the ancient Israelites that wasn’t the issue*- when they heard God created the world in **seven days**- they heard that *God created us to be in a covenant with Him – God created us to be His family*

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Now that word “**oath**”- by which you establish a covenant- by which you make this sacred family bond – is translated into Latin as “Sacramentum”- which we normally translate into English as **sacrament**

So this 1st reading could be translated as, “*with sure knowledge of* ***the sacraments*** *in which they put their faith*”

So in the old covenant – God created the world in **seven** days – in the new Covenant God gives us **seven** sacraments- **seven oaths** through which He enters into a sacred family bond with us

In our 2nd reading today we’re told about the faith of Abraham- and what I want to focus on in that reading is that we are saved – and again that means we have the hope of heaven- *by God’s grace*

Just as Abraham couldn’t have had a child by his nature alone---it took God’s grace*--- it takes God’s grace to conceive faith and to be born into heaven*

It’s God’s grace that gives us faith – it’s God’s grace that allows us to do good works pleasing to Him---*that reading is reminding us that we are saved by the grace of God*

*And that’s important to remember because God’s grace comes to us in the sacraments-* especially Baptism which makes us children of God and the Holy Eucharist where Jesus shares His very life with us

My friends I often run into people who don’t practice their faith by coming to receive the sacraments- and they’ll say, “Well, I’m a good person”

 *But we’re not saved by being good-* **we’re saved by God’s grace**

And God’s grace comes to us in the sacraments- so there are many today who basically say, “I don’t need God’s grace, my goodness will save me—**that’s heresy** [can’t save ourselves]

My friends-- it’s also important to remember that technically speaking – none of us are good- **we’re all sinners**- the bible says that even the just person sins seven times a day

Now compared to Hitler- we’re pretty good- compared to Stalin- we’re pretty good- compared to the idiot in El Paso last week or the jerk in Dayton who killed innocent people– *we’re pretty good*---**but compared to God** – *we’re not good*

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Compared to His sanctity [we have almost nothing]- love [we have almost nothing] – purity [we have almost nothing]-goodness [we have almost nothing]/ **compared to Him we’ve got nothing**

And we are totally dependent on **His grace** so that we can be pleasing in the sight of the Father—*our personal goodness doesn’t cut it*- **our personal goodness doesn’t save us**

[Several years ago a book—“I’m okay – your okay”- very popular—*but we’re not okay on our own*—in fact if that title wanted to reflect what the bible tells us about ourselves – a better title would be: “I’m an ass and so are you”

[Because we have a fallen human nature—because we’re sinners----don’t get me wrong--- we’re very much loved by God---*but we need His grace, we can’t save ourselves*]

And yet there are a lot of people who Sunday after Sunday say, “Hey, I’m good – I don’t need the sacraments—I’m good”

That attitude first of all is heretical- it’s a denial that we’re all sinners who need God’s grace for salvation

 *And it’s a rejection of the saving grace God wants to freely give to us*

You see as our 2nd reading today pointed out- *we’re saved by faith* (11:1-2, 8-19)- if we have the Catholic faith we believe that Jesus is truly present and truly offering Himself to us body, blood, soul and divinity in the Sacrament of the Eucharist----and if we love Him – *we’re going to be here*

So if Catholics don’t come for this grace- either they don’t believe Jesus is really here – *or they don’t love Him* – either way they put their salvation at great risk [defect of faith or a defect of love]

Now I know what some of you are thinking- “*Father in case you haven’t noticed*, **we’re here**- *why are you saying this to us*?”

It’s because many of you have family members who aren’t here- friends, who aren’t here

And you need to share with them that their goodness doesn’t save them – **God’s grace saves them**- *and God’s grace comes to us through the sacraments*

The last thing I want to address- and this is kind of a changing of gears- although it also is about God’s plan to save us – is this:

#  God’s plan is to unite us into one family – His Church

And of course today there are numerous divisions in the Church, *that God doesn’t want*- He gave us offices to His Church – *where He invested people with His own authority as a way to keep His people one- united*

I’m speaking specifically of the pope- the successor of Peter- who we refer to as the Vicar of Christ – He’s the one who holds the keys of the Kingdom—and the bishops [successors of other Apostles]

And a lot of people who reject the authority of the pope- and therefore separate from the unity of the Church- will argue that some of the popes have been big sinners *and so the office of the pope forfeited the authority that Jesus gave to it*

 But Jesus addresses that in today’s gospel (Luke 12:32-48)

Jesus today tells a parable of the Master – and of course He Himself is the master--- but He tells of *the Master who put* ***one servant*** *in charge of His whole household*

 That would be Peter and His successors – the popes

And He says if that servant is faithful that he’ll receive a reward

But He says if that servant is unfaithful – and we’ve certainly had some popes [not many, there’s really only been a handful of bad popes]—that servant will be severely punished

Notice the ones under that “unfaithful” servant whom the Master put in charge of His household – *they suffer* [if he’s not faithful]

And it’s certainly true- when there’s a bad pope- when there’s a bad bishop – when there’s a bad priest---the people under him suffer [sadly--a lot of suffering today because of unfaithful priests and bishops who handled that unfaithfulness in stupid ways]

But notice what Jesus doesn’t say- Jesus doesn’t say if that head servant is unfaithful – *then the other servants don’t have to listen to him* – then he forfeits his authority- the other servants would be justified in over throwing him and starting their own separate household

Jesus doesn’t say any of that- Jesus established the office of the Papacy – *and the one who holds that office* **has Jesus’ own authority [**whether they are worthy of the office or not**]—[Jesus gave the office of bishop…]**

Because when Jesus established the offices (especially the papacy) He said, “What you hold bound on earth I will hold bound in heaven – what you make loose on earth, I will loosen in heaven”

My friends, sadly there are people today *who have bet their salvation that Jesus doesn’t mean what He said—***that seems to me a foolish bet**

My friends—God wants us to be prepared to meet Him

Our reading today really do give us insight into God’s plan in saving us- In His plan He wants all His children united in one family- In His plan He shares with us His saving grace in the sacraments

 By receiving His saving grace---that’s how we’re prepared

 *Let’s use our gifts to build up His one family*

And lets hunger and thirst for His saving grace that comes to us in the sacraments Jesus instituted for our salvation – especially hunger and thirst for the Holy Eucharist where Jesus shares His very life with us