

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Called to Witness**    Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time    Friday, October 6, 2017    8:15 AM    Bar 1:15-22;    **Lk 10:13-16**    (St. Bruno, priest; Bl. Marie-Rose Durocher)    (You are supposed to speak for Christ.)

You can see that one of the **constantly recurring themes in both the Old and the New Testament is the theme of infidelity.** In Baruch, the first reading, there was a detailed report on the history of people, the people of God, the chosen people, who have turned away from God; and in today's gospel very similar. For your clarification, Chorazin and Bethsaida are places within Jewish lands, Capernaum also in Galilee, a Jewish colony or settlement; whereas Tyre and Sidon are outside of the land of the Jews. They are along the coast, and they were populated by gentiles, also called "pagans" or "heathens."

Jesus' point is that if they had seen what the people of Galilee saw, they would have repented; but in fact the people of Galilee are not repenting, and **repenting means renouncing one's life and turning to God.** And this is of course an absolutely essential component to a truly holy life, that we renounce our past: that is, we renounce our egoism; we renounce our self-centeredness; we renounce all of the gods, represented in general by the world and all that the world is interested in, because that's not what God created us for. We have a purpose for living on this planet. We have been created for a reason. **We have been called to the gospel for a reason, and we have to be about that purpose or else it will go worse for us.** It will go worse for us than for the pagans, **for the people who have never heard anything about God. They will be better off than those who have heard and not responded.** That's the whole focus of this gospel reading.

The first part is really addressed to the unrepentant towns. **The last part is actually addressed to the disciples.** The way it's written by Luke, he put the two together, but obviously here now, **"Whoever listens to you listens to me"** is addressed to the disciples; **that means you.** That means **you are supposed to speak for Christ.** You have been called to that purpose. You

have been called to model a new way of living, not pursuing all the things the world thinks important, but to model what God thinks important, amply described and explained in the New Testament.

**“Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me.”** Now that means **be ready for rejection; it will come.** That’s the suffering that we need to accept in order to continue the work of Christ. He and he alone went to the cross, but all of us must share some kind of rejection, and be willing to be rejected for the sake of Christ, because we model rightly the kingdom of God and get rejected for that. **That is the life of a living martyr, literally meaning witness, a living witness.** And we are called to be living witnesses. **“And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”** That means **whoever rejects this new way of life is really rejecting God,** and that is a very great sadness.