

2. September 2020

“To live spiritually”

1 Cor 3,1-9

And so, brothers, I was not able to talk to you as spiritual people; I had to talk to you as people still living by your natural inclinations, still infants in Christ; I fed you with milk and not solid food, for you were not yet able to take it - and even now, you are still not able to, for you are still living by your natural inclinations. As long as there are jealousy and rivalry among you, that surely means that you are still living by your natural inclinations and by merely human principles. While there is one that says, 'I belong to Paul' and another that says, 'I belong to Apollos' are you not being only too human? For what is Apollos and what is Paul? The servants through whom you came to believe, and each has only what the Lord has given him. I did the planting, Apollos did the watering, but God gave growth. In this, neither the planter nor the waterer counts for anything; only God, who gives growth. It is all one who does the planting and who does the watering, and each will have the proper pay for the work that he has done. After all, we do share in God's work; you are God's farm, God's building.

It is necessary that we make progress in the spiritual life, otherwise we will remain immature children! The Lord cannot, however, entrust much to underage children, because they are not yet able to handle the responsibilities and gifts properly! He cannot therefore draw them into his confidence for difficult tasks! They need milk, as the apostle says, i.e. they can only take in what is easily digestible for them! But then what about the crosses of a mission, the resistances that come on the way of discipleship? What about inner spiritual growth?

This shows the need to take seriously the way of discipleship of Christ and to work on all those things where we do not respond in the Spirit of God, but still according to our fallen human nature! Here it is necessary to be vigilant with ourselves and not to close our eyes when we still perceive much "earthly thinking" in us! It is the Spirit of God who wants to transform us, who teaches us to think and act like God! All too often, however, our own interests still stand in the way of this work, which then manifests itself like in jealousy and conflict!

In the church of Corinth there was obviously some kind of division, with people standing by either Paul or Apollos! They had forgotten what was really at stake

and were stuck with completely irrelevant matters! Both Paul and Apollos were at the service of the Lord, and their aim was to glorify Him!

This is also how we must view the various ministries in the Church: We work together in God's farmland, each in the place where God has placed him! Here we complement each other, and any form of envy, jealousy Competition does not come from the Spirit of the Lord, but from our hearts, often even strengthened by the devil!

That is why we look at the heart!

How, for example, should we deal with jealousy and envy? With jealousy we put ourselves in competition with another person, we think that we come off badly in comparison, he gets something we should have (also)! I am not talking about justified jealousy, but about that destructive jealousy that cannot simply leave the good that the other person has and gets, and that makes you unhappy with what you have yourself! This can then become a very nagging feeling; we become unfree towards the other person and can no longer look him or her in the face properly!

As an antidote we should start to thank God for what the other person has received from him! This may go against our feeling, which says that it is disadvantaged! But here it is necessary to use our will, which follows a better knowledge and thus puts itself in the truth! The inner impression that we cannot get enough should also be met with gratitude for our gifts, and the feeling of jealousy can be countered with a concrete invocation of the Holy Spirit! However, on such a journey, we must be prepared to consider jealousy as an evil that must be overcome, and to be vigilant where we abandon ourselves to these feelings or even express ourselves accordingly or act in accordance with them!

Even worse for the soul is envy, which is a true devil's work in our heart! Envy is not only jealous because it does not get what the other person has, but it actively resents it and would like to destroy it! This is why envy is also portrayed extremely ugly in caricatures! If man does not act against envy, he will be eaten up by it!

That is why we should fight even the slightest hint of envy on the path of succession, similar to jealousy! Contrasting concrete acts are also necessary here, e.g. practising generosity, promoting sharing! Envy affects not only material but also spiritual goods! For example, one begrudges the other person that he has the gift of convincing other people and tries to make him ridiculous, etc.

But how can we be trusted more by God if we are still dominated by jealousy and strife? If we want to prove ourselves worthy of greater graces from God's side, then we must overcome our earthly disposition, which is still oriented towards our own self and not towards the glory of God!