

splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take out the splinter that is in your eye," when you cannot see the plank in your own? Hypocrite! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter that is in your brother's eye.

'There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. For every tree can be told by its own fruit; people do not pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. A good man draws what is good from the store of goodness in his heart; a bad man draws what is bad from the store of badness. For a man's words flow out of what fills his heart.'

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**



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# Breaking Open the Word



# THE SAVING WORD

EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / C

2 MARCH 2025

**REMOVE THE PLANK**

Who thought that the Gospels and Jesus' words are humourless? Today's Gospel reflects on one of the key issues that touches all of us and does it in an exaggerated and humorous way. It is about judging others. In my criticism of others and judging them, according to Jesus, I ignore the bigger issue: my inability to self-reflect and see the larger personal weaknesses in my own condemning character. Jesus compares the 'splinter' in the other's eye to the huge 'plank' in one's own.

The eye, in Luke's world, was the gateway to the soul and the primary organ of decision making. For a disciple to be critical of others and not recognise the plank in their own eye is to be blocked from authentic soulful and considered living. This plank must be removed by careful and sustained spiritual surgery through closeness to Jesus. This is the ongoing quest for disciples journeying with Jesus.

In the second half of today's Gospel the image turns to the production of sound fruit. This is more about authentic discipleship than about agricultural production. It is again about the heart. Jesus' words encourage Luke's Gospel's audience, and us, to draw on the heart and live from its reservoir of goodness. As with the earlier humorous parable about seeing, we are invited to see deeply and act with integrity so that our hearts can grow in goodness. Authentic conduct will follow. This is the intent behind the Gospel's final piece of wisdom, that 'words flow out of what fills the heart'.

**Fr Michael Trainor**

**FIRST READING**

Sir 27: 4-7

**A reading from the Book of Sirach.**

*Do not praise someone before they have spoken.*

In a shaken sieve the rubbish is left behind, so too the defects of a man appear in his talk. The kiln tests the work of the potter, the test of a man is in his conversation. The orchard where the tree grows is judged on the quality of its fruit, similarly a man's words betray what he feels. Do not praise a man before he has spoken, since this is the test of men.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

**RESP PSALM**

Ps 91: 2-3, 13-16. R. cf. v. 2

**R. Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.**

1. It is good to give thanks to the Lord / to make music to your name, O Most High, / to proclaim your love in the morning / and your truth in the watches of the night. **R.**

2. The just will flourish like the palm-tree / and grow like a Lebanon cedar. **R.**

3. Planted in the house of the Lord / they will flourish in the courts of our God, / still bearing sap when they are old, / still full sap, still green, / to proclaim that the Lord is just. / In him, my rock, there is no wrong. **R.**

**SECOND READING**

1 Cor 15: 54-58

**A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.**

*Victory has been given to us through Jesus Christ.*

When this perishable nature has put on imperishability, and when this mortal nature has put on immortality, then the words of scripture will come true: Death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting? Now the sting of death is



sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. So let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Never give in then, my dear brothers, never admit defeat; keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be labouring in vain.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Phil 2: 15-16

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Shine on the world like bright stars; you are offering it the word of life. Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL**

Lk 6: 39-45

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.**

*A person speaks from what is in his heart.*

Jesus told a parable to his disciples. 'Can one blind man guide another? Surely both will fall into a pit? The disciple is not superior to his teacher; the fully trained disciples will always be like his teacher. Why do you observe the