

"Guilty Yet Needy."

Psalm 51: 1-12.

John 6:24-35.

Nathan, the Tabernacle Prophet, taught King David an important self reflection lesson with a parable. A rich man had stolen a poor man's lamb then slaughtered and ate it. Enraged, David asked the the rich thief's identity. He desired to execute him. Nathan then boldly responded that David was indeed the thief. The prophet further explained that God was about to take every blessing from David as he had sinned with Bathsheba-"the sheep" he had stolen-from Uriah, her husband and David's best soldier-whom David had sent back into battle to be killed. David then cried aloud: I Have Sinned Against You, My Lord!"

Jesus told a parable about a Publican-Tax Collector and a Pharisee who entered the Temple for prayer, one day. The Pharisee arrogantly lifted his head to Heaven and presented God with a falsehood. He wrongly thanked The Lord for "not making him a sinner" like the Publican praying next to him. The Publican, bowed his head, however, and said to God: "Lord, I Am A Sinner. I Am Not Worthy Of Your Love. Have Mercy Upon Me." The Saviour then concluded that the Publican was therefore the only person of the two who left favorable to God. He told the truth. He was a sinner as we all are.

Antonio Salieri was a 1700's opera composer from Venice, the Italian Republic. Joseph II, the Austrian Emperor, employed Salieri as a court composer in Vienna, Austria's capital as well as the world's music capital. Yet Salieri became rivals with Mozart, a young man and former child prodigy from nearby Salzburg, an Austrian ruled city state. Many music historians have argued that Salieri's intense jealousy against Mozart is a bit exaggerated. Salieri, in fact, included many of Mozart's operas and other musical pieces at his organised musical festivals for the Habsburgs, the Austrian Imperial Family. This was to honour the young genius. And Mozart himself, presented Salieri as an distinguished guest and colleague at his concerts-even arranging eloquent stage coach transportation for his competitor. Yet Salieri was still accused of slandering Mozart's character and work in Imperial society which led to Mozart's frequent unemployment.

Mozart died very poor, age 35. Many believed it was Salieri's treachery that caused Mozart's poverty. Some asserted that Salieri even poisoned the great composer. Yet Mozart's music became ever more popular throughout Europe as it had begun to become during his lifetime. And Mozart's neverending popularity growth only caused Salieri more bitterness and guilt-especially as accusations of his role in Mozart's death began to plague him. Salieri also had many nervous breakdowns which led to a deathly stroke. Salieri is also said to have helplessly cried out to God as he lay dying. The Italian composer supposedly shouted out his shame and exclaimed that none of God's Mercy would strengthen him to forgive himself for his treachery against Mozart. He then breathed his last breath.

Jesus made it clear that He is The Bread of Life. The Bread He Feeds Us is God's Love and Mercy which Jesus made possible for All To Receive. He did so by Becoming the Final Sacrificial Lamb who Died For Our Sins on The Cross. This Ultimate Sacrifice was to finally remove Sin from Blocking Our Eternal Life with God and Himself, The Saviour. The Cross was and Remains Still The Eternal Living Bread Basket. And Christ Continues to Feed Us Living Bread Everyday to Redeem Us of Our Sins with Grace. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ anxiously await to Forgive and Grant us Mercy.

But we must first Confess and Repent. Yet we must do so with Humble Heart and Voice. David and The Publican did so. King David candidly confessed his guilt of Sinning against God. The Tax Collector-Publican even more deeply confessed His Need for God's Grace as well as his Unworthiness of it-A Voice That Represents All of Us. And as Jesus explained, the Publican's Heartfelt Humility sent him home the only one of the two men with God's Mercy. Those who arrogantly praise themselves before God will be Humbled as they will not receive Grace. Yet God will Lift Up and Grace Bless those who honestly Confess Their Sins and Unworthiness. We need only to be True to God and Ourselves. And God must hear Neediness in our voices to Feel Our Sincere Need For His Forgiving Love. David and the Publican knew this and it showed in their cries.

Nonetheless, we must also recognise Neediness to Forgive Others well as Ourselves. Perhaps God would have Healed Salieri had the composer Forgiven Himself and showed Hope rather Hoplessness in his Plea to God.

Salieri needed also to forgive others accusations about him. Indeed, Salieri needed to show his Humility not lack of Self Faith to God.

Jesus himself made clear that We Must Forgive Others To Be Forgiven. If not, we become like the arrogant Pharisee in The Temple. We act as though we ourselves are sinless and that others are beneath us. But the worst lies are those we tell ourselves. We are All Sinners. We Are All Guilty Yet Needy!

Amen.