

Friday. 12<sup>th</sup> week in Ordinary Time.

2 Kings 25: 1-12 Gospel Acc. Ps 144:13 Matthew 8:1-4

King Manasseh had ruled in Jerusalem for 55 years. Because of his many evil deeds and practices and, despite efforts to turn the people back to God by some that followed him, his actions were to bring disaster to the city and its people. So it was that, in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon's reign, Jerusalem was surrounded. The young king, Jehoiachin, surrendered and his family, and all the important people, were led away. Nebuchadnezzar made Jehoiachin's uncle king, changing his name to Zedekiah. By the following year, Zedekiah had rebuilt the defences around the city and Nebuchadnezzar returned to attack it. After eighteen months and much suffering, the walls were breached. The king escaped with his family but was later captured, was blinded and his sons killed. Jerusalem was demolished and only the working, country people, could remain to work in the vineyards and plough the fields.

After all that has just been recounted, today's Gospel Acclamation then sounds rather hollow.... "The Lord is faithful in all his words and loving in all his deeds" But, It is a reminder that God's power is greater than any evil that can be brought about by the devil's work. The above is a dramatic example of the consequences of following evil ways.

The Gospel, by contrast, is considerably more comforting. The Leper's reliance and need of the Lord's compassion and healing love is rewarded, as it always is, through faith and a subsequent desire to follow his will. That choice is ours too!

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