

## TALK 2 - Hope and Presumption – brief outline

### *Presumption*

Presumption itself comes in two forms: A belief that human beings can by their actions earn eternal life; and A belief that salvation has already been secured and there is nothing more to do.

The antidote to presumption is humility – the recognition of the vast difference in our status compared to God's and therefore our complete inability to reach him without the aid of his mercy.

St. Augustine, in his sermon on the tenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, speaks of the presumption:

'Who is deceived by hoping? He who says, God is good, God is merciful, let me do what I please, what I like; let me give loose rein to my lusts, let me gratify the desires of my soul. Why this? Because God is merciful, God is good, God is kind. These men are in danger by hope.'

### Fear of the Lord

Proper fear of God, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, consists in filial fear. The fear that a son or daughter would normally have in relation to their father.

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." Matthew 6:14-15

### The prosperity gospel

The idea that somehow it's okay to pursue riches and to strive after worldly possessions, even when it is clear that Jesus strongly warns against it.

'For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.' (1 Tim 6:10)

Pope Leo 13<sup>th</sup>'s encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891): Paragraph 22. "Therefore, those whom fortune favors are warned that riches do not bring freedom from sorrow and are of no avail for eternal happiness, but rather are obstacles;(Matt. 19:23-24) that the rich should tremble at the threatenings of Jesus Christ - threatenings so unusual in the mouth of our Lord (Luke 6:24-25) - and that a most strict account must be given to the Supreme Judge for all we possess. ... when what necessity demands has been supplied, and one's standing fairly taken thought for, it becomes a duty to give to the poor out of what remains over."

"For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.' (I Cor 1:17-26)

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### Hero worship

‘My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?’ (Jas 2:1-4)

### Being poor in spirit

### Rejoicing as a way of maintaining hope

“**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!** Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 4:4-7)

“I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.” (2 Cor 11:23-27)

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thess 5:16-18)

Habakkuk 3: “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.”

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

Psalms 22:3, proclaims this truth: “God inhabits the praises of his people.”

Psalms 22:1 “My God, why have you forsaken me?”