



First Reading: (*Ezek 33:7-9*) The word of the Lord came to me, saying, “You, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way; he shall die in his iniquity, but you will have saved your life.”

Ps 94:1-2, 6-9

R./ O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.

Second Reading: (*Rom 13:8-10*)

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,”

and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Gospel: (*Mt 18:15-20*) Jesus said to his disciples, “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Reflection: Without the presence of the Lord Jesus, the gatherings are reduced into some kind of general body meetings. Whenever, the church gathering is reduced into just the weekly meetings of the members, it is deprived of its divine dimension. It is the divine dimension of the “people of God” that gives the divine authority to bind and loose. One of the redemptive names of Yahweh is “tisdenu,” – righteousness. Yahweh’s stand on right and

wrong becomes the people's stand on right and wrong. This mechanism is understood as the binding and loosening. It is so unfortunate that the church is no more the "reference" of right and wrong in the world. The secular world frames the standard of "binding and loosening" even for the church. We are no more a spiritual force that can set the sense of "right and wrong." Why such a situation has come about? Maybe as the first reading points out, the church is no more a prophetic voice in the world.