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Today, the Scriptures present us with a powerful challenge to make three crucial choices in our lives. These choices are about how we relate to others—whether we choose love over hatred, forgiveness over revenge, and mercy over judgment.

In the first reading from the First Book of Samuel, we see the example of King David. David has every reason to kill Saul, who had been trying to take his life. Yet, David chooses the path of forgiveness. He respects Saul and chooses to show mercy rather than exact revenge. This decision illustrates the first type of choice we are called to make: the choice to practice the "Golden Rule." Jesus in today's Gospel calls us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, and to pray for those who mistreat us. It is easy to love those who love us, but Jesus calls us to a radical love, one that goes beyond the boundaries of human instinct. He asks us to show the same compassion and forgiveness that God shows us.

The Responsorial Psalm reminds us of God's mercy and compassion. The Psalmist sings, "The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in kindness." This is how God treats us, and this is how we are called to treat others. Just as we are the recipients of God's great mercy, we are called to extend that same mercy to those around us. So, the first lesson we learn today is that our relationships with others must be rooted in love and mercy, even towards those who might hurt us.

In the second reading, St. Paul contrasts the choice of the "First Adam" with the choice of the "Second Adam," Jesus. The First Adam made the wrong choice of disobedience, which brought death into the world. But Jesus, the Second Adam, made the right choice. He obeyed God's will, even to the point of suffering and dying on the Cross. Through His obedience and sacrifice, Jesus opened the way to life. In our relationships with others, we are called to choose unconditional, agape i.e. love over the negative emotions of jealousy, envy, and hatred. When we choose to love as Jesus loves us, we experience the transforming power of God's grace.

Let us turn to the Gospel of Luke. Jesus gives us His revolutionary moral teaching, where He expands on the Golden Rule: "Do to others as you would have them do to you." This is not merely a suggestion but a command from our Lord. He goes further to tell us that we must love our enemies, bless those who curse us, and pray for those who mistreat us. Jesus does not make this an optional practice but a requirement for all His disciples. If we are children of a loving, forgiving, and merciful Father, we must reflect that same love in our relationships.

So, what does this mean for us today? How can we apply this in our daily lives?

First, we need to practice the Golden Rule in its fullest form. It's easy to love those who love us in return, but what about those who criticize us or hurt us? The challenge is to respond with kindness, to love them even when they don't deserve it, and to be the first to extend the hand of forgiveness. If we want others to forgive us and treat us with kindness, we must begin by doing the same for them.

Second, we need to pray for the strength to forgive. At every Mass, we pray The Lord's Prayer, "Our Father...", asking God to forgive us as we forgive others. But let's be honest: forgiving is not always easy. We can be hurt, angry, and resentful, and it is easy to want to seek revenge. But the power of forgiveness is what truly heals our hearts. Remember how God has forgiven us, and let that be the motivation for our forgiveness. Even if we start small—by controlling our words, resisting the urge to criticize, and bearing with the irritating behaviors of others—we are making progress. Forgiveness is a choice, and it is a choice we must make every day.

As we approach the altar today, let us ask for the grace to follow Jesus' example and make these choices in our daily lives. May we be instruments of God's love, mercy, and forgiveness to a world that so desperately needs it.