

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Feb 19th 2014

Today, we are blessed with two wonderful readings that really allow me to reflect on my relationship with God. The first is from James. What great advice he offers to us all when he writes that “everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger for anger does not accomplish the righteousness of God.” As a psychologist, I am certainly tuned into the importance of listening to family, friends, and my patients. After all, I learned long ago that God gave us two ears and one mouth, so, use them accordingly. In fact, I think my mom was probably the first to tell me that as a child. But James gives these words even deeper meaning. We live in a land of clutter and much of that takes the form of noise – the computer, the iPod, TV, radio, you name it. Although they keep us up to date, they also distract us and keep us out of touch with God. I truly believe that God tries earnestly to speak to us throughout our day, but we are so overstimulated by these other distractions that we do not have time to hear what he is saying. Again, we should be “quick to hear.” James also, and maybe more importantly, reminds us that we should not only hear the word of God, but we must do something with it. And what better way to act than to unselfishly care for those most in need. In doing this, we humbly welcome God’s words.

In our Gospel reading, Mark tells the story of Jesus and his healing of a blind man. Now, a lot has been written about this reading with much focus on why Jesus took two attempts at curing the man’s blindness. The best way for me to make sense of this reading is to relate it to my own life with the hope it may be meaningful for you as well. I was baptized and then grew up in a Catholic family – Catholic grade school, public school after that since we could not afford otherwise, and then to Creighton as an undergraduate – yes, lots of grants and generous support. Throughout life, mom and dad stressed the importance of mass and being good Catholics. And I think my faith was fairly strong – yes, I could see, but my religious life was fuzzy or not completely focused. Junior high, high school, and even college was a little unfocused spiritually - people looked like “walking trees.” I was fortunate enough to be given a second chance at enhancing my faith when I was required to take theology at Creighton and stumbled into a course entitled Jesus Christ Savior (or something like that) from Dr. Michael Lawler. Although a tough course, it really provided a new perspective of Jesus and my relationship to him and God. It spurred me to further reading and inquiry and eventually into a deeper understanding of Jesus and my relationship with God. And it was through this inquiry and my willingness to hear God’s message that my spiritual sight was restored and I was able to see clearly and to truly get it. Now, is my spirituality or my connection with God always perfectly clear? No — but when it occasionally becomes fuzzy, it always seems to help when I purposely reconnect with God through more intense study or by being more open to hearing his word.

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