

## Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Apr 1st 2014

Lent can be a very challenging time for people of faith. Many of us at this near midpoint of this season may have lost momentum and initiative to stay faithful to a promise made Ash Wednesday that this time, this year would be different. In these moments we often forget that we do nothing absent from God's power and if we try on just our own will and power to do, say, be more faithful, better, closer to God, we will not succeed.

God desires our will to want to change but we must tap into his grace to make those changes welling up in our spirit. We must understand that even now at this time in Lent, if we have fallen from grace, God's unconditional love and deep well of forgiveness will lift us up if we have the sincere desire to continue to seek his guidance and serve his kingdom.

Is there anything holding you back from God's healing grace? The parable of the man ill for 38 years is a real lesson for us. Jesus asks the man, "Do you really want to be healed?" The barrier to healing was the man's own inability to enter the pool and no one to help place him in the pool. Yet the man lay there for a long time, in faith, wanting to be changed and waiting for a miracle.

God will not impose change against our will. If we are content to stay as we are or if we lose our will because we have fallen, then no amount of coaxing will change us. If we wish to move to be free from the power of sin and be transformed let us pray for the fire in our hearts to be rekindled for our spiritual growth and change.

Let us overcome our fears and our internal strife with confidence from the Psalmist:

God is our refuge and our strength,

an ever-present help in distress.

Therefore we fear not, though the earth be shaken

and the mountains plunge into the depths of the sea.

Mark Latta