

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Jul 7th 2014

Today's scripture readings speak to me of the power of faith. They also speak of doubt and the contrast between faith and doubt. In the book of Hosea, God writes us a love letter and speaks to us as a loving husband to his bride. "I will espouse you to me forever". The psalmist proclaims, "The Lord is good to all and compassionate toward all his works". In Matthew, Jesus performs two miracles. He heals a woman who suffered hemorrhages for twelve years and raises a young girl from the dead. Strong evidence for the power of faith. Miracles. They seem to produce strong reactions in people. Some believe and some don't. Some think miracles happen on a daily basis. Some think there is no such thing. I don't think there is anything wrong with doubt. Jesus did not condemn Thomas when he doubted. I do think doubt can lead to cynicism, which is bad. The crowd ridiculed Jesus when he stated the girl was not dead. They did not expect a miracle. Am I like the people in the crowd? Do I expect miracles or am I cynical? Is my doubt cynicism? Why are some healed and some not? We are told to resist comparisons to other people. That's like saying resist breathing. Do we believe we are part of God's plan? Do we believe God's plan is so great that we simply cannot comprehend it? Do we believe God loves us (even in our doubt)? Jesus puzzled people then and now. There is plenty of evidence that faith has great power. Jesus tells the woman suffering from hemorrhages, "Your faith has saved you". The father of the daughter who has died tells Jesus, "Lay your hand on her and she will live". How can I have such faith? Recently, I decided that I would like to sing in my church's choir. I love to sing, but I had not sung in a choir in over 30 years. I had many doubts and misgivings. Would I be good enough? Could I even do this after so many years? However, after one practice I realized, hey, I may be bad, but I'm not as bad as some of these other guys. I've got to work on my humility. And I've got to resist those darned comparisons. Then our director gave us the music we were to sing. Wow! This was ambitious! I think Beethoven might have complained about the level of difficulty. I had a vision of people running out of the sanctuary with their hands over their ears.... And God following close behind. Our director must have seen the looks on our faces. He could see our lack of faith. He lead us in prayer and then he said to us, trust the Holy Spirit, make your goal to glorify God and practice, practice, practice. Well, as you may have guessed, the music was beautiful. I felt blessed to have been part it. I expected the worst and God provided a miracle. Kind of amazing. A strong faith does not just happen. Faith comes from practice. Spending time with God and in God's word. My prayer today is for those of who, at times, are overwhelmed by doubt. That we would have the faith that produces miracles.

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