

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Oct 24th 2015

"We are a people who long to see His face." Psalm 24

Even though we are to live by faith and not by sight, sometimes in my humanness I just need to see a "tangible" Jesus. I long to see His face and gaze into His eyes which are so full of mercy and compassion.

When my alarm goes off each morning, I head downstairs to my prayer room. With my journal and bible in hand, I reflect on the readings for the day and listen for His small, still voice when He speaks to me. No one in my house is awake at this time, so my house is quiet and still.

It is a perfect place and time to be with my Jesus.

Yes, I said my Jesus.

In my prayer room, I have a big picture of Jesus on my wall. He greets me each morning and invites me to spend some time with Him. I am captivated by His eyes and find it easy to share my joys and concerns with Him. It is as if I can reach out and touch Him in a "tangible" way to connect with Him. Psalm 24 reminds me that we are a people who long to see His face.

There are times, however, when I question whether or not I should be standing in His holy place. Is my heart clean? I find it hard to go down stairs to my prayer room and face my Jesus, when I have lived according to the flesh in my sinfulness and not according to the spirit. Words vented in frustration because of my daughter's lack of cleanliness in her bedroom. Perhaps it was a slightly disrespectful attitude toward a coworker. Or maybe, it was the mental list I made of things I wish were different about my spouse. Guilt or shame over my undesirable behavior, keep me from wanting to face my Jesus and look into His eyes. However, In Romans, I am reminded that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because the spirit of God dwells in me.

When I want to express my love for my puppy, I hold his face in my hands and look into his eyes so that we are face to face. I whisper messages of love regardless of whether or not he was a good puppy or a naughty puppy that day. I can feel his body just melt in my hands, so full of peace.

Similarly, I imagine Jesus gently holding my face in His hands. With eyes full of mercy and compassion, He gazes into my eyes and whispers messages of love. The Lord blesses me with His gift of peace. Repenting and acknowledging my sins, the Lord forgives my sinful actions. He gives me peace so that I can face my Jesus again. Like my puppy, I am able to melt in the Lord's hands because my spirit is full of life and peace.

God takes pleasure in these AHA moments. It pleases God when my heart desires to live according to the spirit and not according to the flesh.

I grow in my faith. In the gospel reading today, Jesus tells us of a parable about a fig tree that when the ground around it is cultivated and fertilized, will bear fruit. When centered on Jesus, this conversion of heart and desire for a pure heart, produces lasting changes in me that like the fig tree, bears fruit not

only for the Lord, but for His church, and for one another.

St. Anthony Mary Claret whose feast day we celebrate today said "The man who truly loves God also loves his neighbor".

Father, I long to see your face. Fill me with your spirit of love. Your spirit within me is the well spring of everlasting life. I want to bear fruit for you.

In Jesus name, Amen.

Theresa Abbott-Creighton University's Student Health Department