

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Feb 1st 2017

Brothers and sisters:

In your struggle against sin

you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood.

You have also forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as children:

My son, do not disdain the discipline of the Lord

or lose heart when reproved by him;

for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines;

he scourges every son he acknowledges.

Endure your trials as "discipline";

God treats you as his sons.

For what "son" is there whom his father does not discipline?

At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain,

yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness

to those who are trained by it.

So strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees.

Make straight paths for your feet,

that what is lame may not be dislocated but healed.

Strive for peace with everyone,

and for that holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

See to it that no one be deprived of the grace of God,

that no bitter root spring up and cause trouble,

through which many may become defiled.

I realized this reading is really a God thing when the reading spoke to me in a loud roar! I get discouraged every single day. I think if we were all honest we could admit that we wonder why all this “stuff” has to happen to us. I speak loudly, and often, asking why me God? We need God's discipline to form us into his stewards and sometimes our internal voice is so loud we can't hear His voice, so He shows us our weaknesses and allows us to open our hearts to His ways.

Who among us like discipline? This is not the discipline of our earthly father, but that of our heavenly Father. When we know we need to change, there's an internal stress within our hearts, the old person trying to let the new person come out. The change doesn't feel natural, so it's easy to go back to our old ways of doing things. It requires a different way of thinking, development of willpower and faith that we can accomplish this new goal. The best way I know how to do this is to invite God into my being and let him take control. I ask Him to change me, and somehow He accomplishes just what he wants to happen.

Today's reading could not be more appropriate for me at this particular time in my life. As I am writing this reflection, I am thinking back over the last 14 days which have challenged and disciplined me in an entirely new way. My father suffered a stroke, the kind of stroke that has rendered him needing the help of others to simply stand up and sit down. The type of stroke that has taken away his independence, requiring him to completely rely on others. He's a strong-willed and focused man, one who still at the age of 82 works out every morning. He is left-handed and the stroke rendered him unable to use his left hand, and leg. Dad is an artist, and his artistry of drawing and engraving have been put to sleep as a result of this stroke. Over the last 14 days I have been by his side, encouraging him, listening to his tear-filled stories of life. But I am also reminding him that God is there if he simply calls out His name.

I am especially drawn to the following section from today's reading, "so strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees. Make straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be dislocated but healed." Our Heavenly Father can heal all things, and he brings us things that drop us to our knees so that we can see His love for us as His children. Discipline is necessary so we can trust our God to lift us up when we fall. God places people in our lives who understand God's disciplines and have lived through those journeys of refinement. My earthly father is on this journey. While he has become discouraged and questioning why God would do this, I am quick to remind him that God is in the middle of everything, especially the healing of his broken body. As his daughter, and as a servant of God I am being disciplined and refined to understand the need to encourage my father with the words

in our reading today. When we let God be the pilot on our journey, He will steer us exactly where we need to be. While we may not want to be there, He knows why it's necessary. Discipline requires a mental and sometimes a physical shift. It requires changing the way we think. God wants to transform us into a new creation, taking on Christ-like behaviors and responses.

God disciplines those whom He loves. When we are refined and transformed through God' discipline, we can truly believe that we are God's children. So the next time you ask why it's happening, remember that our Heavenly Father is watching over you and knows the course you need

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