

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Mar 29th 2017**

Several years ago, I read the bestselling novel written by William P. Young *The Shack* and was excited to see the film adaptation recently when it opened. It is heartwarming when mediums for storytelling such as film and book transcend our culture and bring God to us in a way that we talk about, discuss and even argue about God. I am thankful to *The Shack* for that opportunity.

Today's readings brought me deeper into several of the topics raised in *The Shack*. The two topics I will focus on in this reflection will be the unconditional love of God and how forgiveness can be worked through with the power of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In Isaiah 49:8-15 the prophet Isaiah reminds God's people that while they are presently in exile, there is the hope that things will be better. The response to the people's cries that the LORD had forgotten and forsaken them, is that the LORD was and will always be with them no matter what. God's unconditional love! God is with us even in our darkest moments. Our moments of exile. The main character Mack in *The Shack* experiences exile. He feels abandoned by God and that God abandoned those he loves. Mack questions why God lets bad things happen. Isaiah's response is the response for the people then and continues to be the response for us today. The response for Mack. No matter what, God is always with us. During those times when we turn away from God and are in exile, God doesn't turn away from us. ["Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget; I will never forget you." Isaiah 49:15] God's unconditional love!

Unforgiveness is one of the many ways so many of us experience exile. Unforgiveness eats away at us. Mack eventually takes a turn in the movie towards forgiveness with the empowerment of the the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. ["I cannot do anything on my own;" John 5:30] Jesus is our role model. We can't do anything on our own.

The LORD is near to all who call upon him, To all who call upon him in truth. Psalm 145:18

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