

## Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Dec 10th 2018

When I read the gospel for today, I was impressed with the sheer audacity of the paralyzed man's dedicated and zealous friends. The scene portrayed in the gospel must have been chaotic. Luke 5:17-18 summarized how people had come from every village in the area and that the power of the Lord was with him for healing. The friends who brought the paralyzed man to Jesus for healing could not get past such a large crowd. Many people at the house must have been pushing for a touch, word of encouragement or healing from Jesus. Imagine how the crowd must have responded as this feisty group of friends cut a hole in the roof and lowered their friend to the feet of Jesus. I wonder if the friends considered the owner of the house as they tore open a hole in the roof large enough to let a stretcher through. The friends not only cut in line, but they cut to the front of the line by coming in through the roof.

And Jesus rewarded them greatly for their faith.

Jesus not only healed the paralyzed man physically, but he took the occasion to show the great glory and splendor of God that is described so eloquently in the first reading. By healing not only his body, but forgiving his sins, Jesus taught the crowd, which included the Pharisees, that God is more generous than we expect. When Jesus proclaims the man free of his sins, he teaches the crowd that God is more powerful than our human-made designations of blasphemy. Jesus teaches the crowd, and us today, that God loves us with such abundance that he heals our bodies, forgives our sins, and knows our hearts.

God loves us with abundance and in the Psalm, we are reminded that God comes to save us. God came to us in the person of Jesus and continues to come to us and save us in ways we may not expect.

During this season of Advent, we are reminded that Jesus came to save us in the form of a baby born to Mary in a manger. The Jews of the time were waiting for the coming of the Messiah, but they did not expect the King and Savior to come into the world the way he did; in poverty and simplicity.

The Gospel concludes with, "Then astonishment seized them all and they glorified God, and, struck with awe, they said, 'We have seen incredible things today'" (Lk 5:26). What incredible things is God doing today that leave you astonished and filled with joy and gladness? If you haven't felt astonished by God recently, may I suggest you do something audacious and zealous to help someone, perhaps a friend, in need?

As the Christmas gift-giving season approaches, this might involve spending time with someone in need of your "presence" more than your "presents". Or in this culture in the U.S. of status and recognition, it is audacious to give to someone in need anonymously. I simply encourage us all to be bold in our faith and in our giving, like those friends of the paralyzed man.

Questions to ponder:

What "roof" in our lives needs to have a hole torn through it so that Jesus can be reached?

Have I ever had a dedicated and zealous friend or family member who had the audacity to pave my way to Jesus?

Have I ever been that friend to someone who needed the presence and healing of Jesus?

Do I know of a person who needs an audacious and zealous friend to show them Jesus? Can I be that friend?

*Click on the link below to send an e-mail response to the writer of this reflection.*

*KathyMartin@creighton.edu*

Kathy Martin-Creighton University's Campus Ministry