
6th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST -2020

Romans 12:6-14 & Matthew 9:1-8

As a healer, Jesus did not specialize in any one field of medicine. He cared for those in need, whether their problem was physical, psychological, or spiritual. He desired wholeness for people so they might have abundant life. Whatever prevented people from living a Godly life concerned Jesus genuinely. The person with paralysis in our Gospel reading this morning exemplifies His goal.

In this situation, the paralytic needed both his friends and Jesus to receive healing. He needed his friends to bring him to Jesus. In Mark's Gospel, he tells us they not only took him to Jesus but opened a hole in the roof to lower him down to Him.

These men's faith deeply moved Jesus and He healed their paralytic friend. But why did He not mention the word "healing"? All He said was, "My son, your sins are forgiven." When some of the religious leaders overheard those words, they thought, "This is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, "So that you will know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins" He then turned to the invalid, "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." The people said, "We never saw anything like this!"

What did sin have to do with the man's paralysis, you might ask? Sin is the source of all our misery, for it promotes a life without God. A creature cannot exist or even survive without his creator. Without redemptive grace, our sin-infested life has no meaning because only He who created life can heal life. His grace restores those necessary original gifts of faith, hope, and love. Faith gives us God's promise we will achieve eternal happiness. Hope gives us God's promise this achievement is possible. Love guarantees this promise.

So, it was necessary here for Jesus to forgive sin. With His first words to the man that his sins are forgiven, He evoked an adverse reaction from the religious leaders by claiming authority, as the "Son of man," to forgive sin. Only after twice emphasizing his authority to forgive sin Jesus tells the man to pick up his mat and go home. It is also interesting that the religious leaders seem to have little if any difficulty with Jesus' healing miracles but insist that only God can forgive a person's sins. Today we would likely find the opposite reaction, with people open to someone forgiving sin, but certain that no one could perform miraculous healing.

Sin and grace are the highest realities of life. Sin represent a loss of truth, loss of love, and loss of God. Grace restores it. His grace, an essential gift of God's love, cannot be earned. A loving relationship with God can be restored through confession.

In confession of sins, forgiveness has two conditions attached to it. First, the sinner must be sorry for having offended God, and not because he deserves punishment for his guilt. Second, there must be an affirmative determination to amend one's life, the will not to sin again. Finally, this feeling must be expressed outwardly by telling one's sins to a priest.

A thorough examination of conscience is essential to evaluate the malice of our offence against God, and the damage they may have caused others. All these conditions being present, God will do the rest.

In modern society, the cause of many illnesses, both physical and mental, is the same - unforgiven personal sins. Unforgiven sins are common because they are unconfessed and never asked their forgiveness. They are suppressed and hidden in fear of embarrassment when disclosing them.

A man purchased a white mouse to use as food for his pet snake. He dropped the unsuspecting mouse into the snake's glass cage, where the snake was sleeping in a sawdust bed. The tiny mouse had a serious problem on its hands. At any moment, it could be swallowed alive. The mouse needed to come up with a brilliant plan.

What did the terrified creature do? It quickly got to work, covering the snake with sawdust chips to bury it. With that, the mouse thought it had solved its problem.

The solution, however, came from outside. The man took pity on the silly little mouse and removed it from the cage. No matter how hard we try to cover up our sins, it is fool's work. Sin will eventually awake from sleep and shake off its cover. Were it not for the saving grace of the Master's hand through confession; sin would eat us alive!

The sacrament of confession is a spiritual barometer. For a confession to take place, we need humility, the humility to go before God in front of a witness and confess to God our sins. But if we do not confess, we must not expect the divine healing necessary in our lives. If we are true believers, then it is for us to go to Christ and be healed by Him through the sacraments He has given us in His Body, His Church.

Christ, the Great Physician of our souls, will restore us too, as He did the paralytic, if we come before His presence with faith, with hope of restoration, of growth, and of renewal in Him. He alone is God, the only One who can forgive our sins, renew our baptism, and help us progress in life. Call on Him whenever you need Him, entrust yourself to His grace and mercy. His grace is sufficient, and His strength is perfected in weakness.

Amen!