**I Love to Tell the Story**

Explore every story of Jesus in this year-long devotional guide. Go at your own pace using the online archive.

**Day 106 : What Defiles a person**

**Read: Matt 15: 1-20; Mark 7: 1-23**

Guided reflection:

Here we go again. The Pharisees are appalled at how Jesus’ disciples did not follow the rules of the day. They, themselves, were so careful to go through all the rituals… but Jesus stops the Pharisees in their tracks by saying that all their rituals have nothing to do with what defiles a person! Jesus says it is what is in our hearts and what goes in and through our minds that messes up our lives. Think of your current (or last) mess – how did the way you thought about things affect your action or reaction? Is it not true that the way you THINK about things gets you into trouble? Just stopping what you are doing will not help until you change the way you think about things! So, where do you need to change the way you think about things? Where are you defiling your own life by your thinking?

Guided prayer:

*“OK, God, I get it. I see that the things I do that are harmful to myself and to others are the end result of the way I think. Just like my computer, only what I put in is what comes out. So help me guard what I feed my mind. Help me think like you so then I can act like you and people will see your face reflected in me. Amen”*

**Day 107 : The Canaanite Women**

**Read: Matt 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30**

Guided reflection:

This is one of the cases where I needed to be there to watch what happened. Just reading the words, it seems that Jesus is rude to this desperate woman! Was Jesus’ tone cold and distant, or did he lean down and in tender words say that it is not fair to take children’s bread and throw to the dogs? Was he speaking to her or to his disciples who wanted her to be gone from their sight? Was this a racial issue since Jesus came for the Jews and she was not a Jew? Her answer to Jesus showed such great faith and hope. Jesus answered her prayer and her daughter was healed. Bottom line – Jesus responds to our faith. To whom do you relate in this story – the disciples or the out of place woman?

Guided prayer:

*“O God, I have prejudices… Oh, I like to think I don’t, but as a human being, I see others as less important, or unworthy, or from the wrong side of the tracks. The list goes on. Help me face the fact that I am the one who might be the unimportant one, the one from the wrong place. But also help me remember that you are the God of us all. Thank you for sending Jesus, who showed us that it is our faith – not our circumstances or our background– that is the key to answered prayers. Amen”*

**Day 108: The Healing of the Deaf Mute Person**

**Read: Mark 7: 31-37 (also Matt 15:29-31)**

Guided reflection:

Another miracle story. This time a man who is deaf and unable to speak. Jesus took him off to the side and did some strange things: He put his fingers in his ears and spat and touched his tongue. The man was healed – able to speak and hear! Jesus told them not to tell anyone, but how can you keep such good news to yourself? The purpose of doing this study to for us to observe all that Jesus did and taught. So, this is what Jesus did! He had compassion for those who were ill and healed them. As it is in our power, should we not be about the same?

Guided prayer:

*“Healing God, open my eyes to others around me and show me where I can be the hands and feet of Jesus for hurting people. Amen. “*

**Day 109: The Feeding of Four Thousand**

**Read: Matt 15: 32-39; Mark 8: 1-10**

Guided reflection:

On Day 103, we had the story of the feeding of the 5000, now Jesus has been teaching and touching people for three days and the folks, all 4000 of them, are hungry! Jesus wants them to be fed, but there is no food. Once again, little becomes much when placed in Jesus’ hands. They found just seven loaves and a few fish. Once again, there are leftovers! When it is all over, Jesus gets in a boat and leaves the crowds. Do you get the idea that Jesus is not anxious about the little things?

Guided prayer:

*“Help me to get my priorities straight. Help me to seek your kingdom first and then everything else will fall into place. Forgive me, O God, for living an anxious life about the little things. Help me keep the big picture clearly in my head! Amen!”*

**Day 110: The Pharisees want a sign from Jesus**

**Read: Matt 16: 1-4; Mark 11-13; Luke 11:29**

Guided reflection:

The Pharisees are frustrated. This Jesus fellow keeps mocking them with all these miracles and the people are buying this Messiah thing! They want a sign, some proof from heaven by Jesus. But Jesus knows their hearts – they are not open to see or hear anything about Jesus! They have signs all over the place and have not heeded them, so what will they do with more signs? Jesus walks away from them. By the way, do you know the rhyme: “Pink at night, sailors delight; pink in the morning, sailors give warning!” See, Jesus knew that one too! Just as we can read the signs of weather by the clouds, so the heavens declare the glory of God, if we are just open to see! The signs are not the problem but having eyes that are open to see is!

Guided Prayer:

 *“Again I sing this song to you: “Open my eyes that I might see. Glimpses of truth you have for me”*

*Help me not be like the Pharisees who wanted more signs but help me open my heart and my eyes to see how you are speaking to me already! Amen!*