



Lenten Reflection for Tuesday, February 28, 2023

For the podcast click [here](#) to listen.

Matthew 9: 1-8

And after getting into a boat he crossed the water and came to his own town.

And just then some people were carrying a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.' Then some of the scribes said to themselves, 'This man is blaspheming.' But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Stand up and walk"? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—he then said to the paralytic—'Stand up, take your bed and go to your home.' And he stood up and went to his home. When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

Today's reflection is by Lisa Melodia.

This is one of the verses we read quite frequently from my son's children's bible. Luke's account tells the story with greater dramatic flair. The paralyzed man's friends climb up the roof, remove some of the tiles and then lower him down to get around the crowds and in front of Jesus. When Jesus tells the man, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven," I can't help but wonder if the man and his friends were disappointed. I imagine they were hoping Jesus would help him walk again. The man was seeking a physical transformation.

Since my son started school in September we have been battling colds, coughs, fevers, pink eye. With this shock to our family's immune system along with living during a global pandemic, focus has been understandably on our physical health. Reading this scripture, thinking about it from the paralyzed man's

perspective has also challenged what my own reaction would be. My immediate need and desire would be an end to my physical suffering. In the end, Jesus shows that yes he can heal. The man walks again. But the most profound healing begins with addressing one's spiritual sickness. Reading this passage reminds me that the cleansing of sin demonstrates greater grace and healing than just commanding the man to walk again.

In my son's children's bible the emphasis of the story is that Jesus heals the sick. It doesn't include the verse that Jesus first offered to forgive his sins. For a lesson for a child this makes sense to me. The purpose is to fill children with awe at what Jesus can do and to inspire similar care for others. It ends with a prayer for the child to pray, "Dear God help me to care for those who are sick." Focusing my reading on Jesus' loving promise "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven," I've written my own prayer. Dear God, help me to recognize my own sins and to seek your grace for forgiveness and healing.

Lisa lives with her husband, Loyal, and two children, Isaac and Frances, in Windsor Terrace. She works as a post producer in television. She feels blessed to live in this community and to be part of Holy Apostles.

