

I love you...I've always loved you...I'm here for you and when you get this, please talk to me. This is what I picture in my heart that God is saying all the time. Whether we hear it or not; however, is the question. How many of you sometimes feel as though you can't hear God or that he isn't talking to you? How many of you sometimes feel as though God is far away? Sometimes, when we are facing difficulties such as sickness, financial issues, physical limitations or emotional issues, it can be hard to hear God.

Now this gospel reading starts in somewhat of a strange way. St. Luke gives a list of names and places that likely don't mean much to us. We live in a time now that we're not that interested in Roman governors, rulers or geography from 20 centuries ago, we're interested in Jesus and our relationship with him. However, there is something important about these names. Based upon the names mentioned, we know that the events St. Luke is writing about took place sometime in late 27AD to late 28AD. At this point in time, Israel had fallen and was corrupt, making it time for the Messiah to be revealed. Before that could happen though, a prophet had to rise and call the people back to God...and then you have John the Baptist, proclaiming the coming of Christ Jesus.

So taking this information regarding the names and details, what should we get from the readings today? Our readings today absolutely ring out that God wants to be involved in our lives and we should always make sure our heart is prepared to receive him. The Gospel reading tells us of John the Baptist "Proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" and how we need to make straight the path. Likewise, in the second reading St. Paul makes one of the most powerful comments in all of the New Testament. He says "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus". He lets us know that God didn't just create us and then forget about us. He knows everything about us, where we were born, where we grew up, what we have suffered and enjoyed, and those deep dark wounds in our hearts that we haven't told anyone about. He knows now, just like he knew then, that it is time for us to have our Messiah, we just each need to personally prepare the path for him in our hearts.

So what can we, what SHOULD we do to allow God to come into our heart on that straight path? First thing we can do is have an honest, regular prayer life. We need to pray more often than just when we're in trouble or need help. We should learn to have a conversation with God every day. The more we talk with him, the more we'll get used to his voice and be able to hear it when we need to. The next thing we can do is carry our crosses. We need to look at the crucifix, contemplate what it means and teach ourselves that suffering isn't outside of God's plan of salvation, it can be an essential part of it. Lastly, we need to help others carry their crosses. One of the worst things that the devil does to us it makes us think so much about ourselves that we lose sight of supporting, consoling, and encouraging others who are suffering. In doing these things, we are making the path straight, we are making the hills low and filling the valleys of our lives so as to prepare the way for the Lord. If we can help someone else do these things, we can become like John the Baptist to them and give them a wonderful gift for Christmas, that being an understanding of God's love and hopefully making it easier for us to hear it when God tells us that He loves us, that He's always loved us, that He's here for us and that He wants to talk with us.

Deacon Corey Compton, Homily, Second Sunday of Advent, December 9, 2018