

Keeping Focused on Our Journey

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

In the film *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, Indiana Jones needs to journey through a series of obstacles to obtain the Holy Grail to save his father's life. Through these obstacles he uses his father's journal to help him survive to reach the grail. At first, Indy needs to be humble before God, so he kneels avoiding death. Second, he spells Jehovah correctly to avoid falling through the floor to his death. The last obstacle that he needs to overcome before reaching the knight who guards the grail is a leap of faith. There is a huge canyon separating him from the grail and the water of eternal life. His father's journal had clues that Indy needed to take a leap of faith. Indy thought it was impossible. However, he gathered his thoughts and took a step of faith, finding a rock bridge beneath his feet. He makes it to the knight, chooses the grail and saves his father's life.

Throughout this process Indiana's faith was challenged. The promise of the grail kept him going on his journey.

In all of our readings for today, God challenges us to see his promises and his faithfulness to us. In the reading from Hosea, God tells Israel that he is leaving them. God wants Israel to live out the covenant that he made with them.

In our Psalm, we are reminded that we can call on God in our day of trouble and that he will be there.

In our text from Romans, Paul reminds us of the promise that God made to Abraham – to be the father of many nations. Although Abraham was old when God made this promise and Sarah was barren, he grew in his faith because he believed God would do what he said he would.

Finally, in our gospel text, Matthew follows Jesus. A synagogue leader comes and asks Jesus to heal his daughter, and a woman who has been bleeding for twelve years had the courage to touch Jesus' cloak to be healed.

The gospel text demonstrates for us the belief that people had in God. Matthew gave up his life as a tax collector for a new life – a life of discipleship. The leader in the synagogue believed that Jesus could heal his daughter and the woman believed in Jesus' promise of healing.

One could get into some trouble with this text; a person could ask, why doesn't God heal me or why doesn't God heal my friend or family member?

In spite of those questions, the question that I kept thinking about when I read the texts for today is what is our focus? In the gospel text, the focus of all the individuals, with the exception of the Pharisees, was Jesus and his promises. In

our epistle lesson, Paul reminds us that Abraham believed in what God had promised him.

What do we focus on in our lives? Is it Jesus?

We live in a culture where we tend to look out for ourselves. We want a good career. We hope to be financially secure. We want our families to be safe, happy, and healthy. These aren't bad things, but I think sometimes our thoughts get clouded. We look to the tangible things that surround us and we focus our lives around them. We organize our lives around activities and events. We organize our finances around things that we think are important. Our priorities in life impact our decisions.

Israel focused on military powers and not God. The Pharisees seemed to be focused on being righteous and having all knowledge concerning religious matters.

In the midst of the things that we focus on in our daily lives – where does God fit? Do we focus on God or other things? Are we too busy to take time for prayer, for bible study, and to help our neighbor? Do we ask ourselves where God is in this activity or this decision?

This summer at Saint Nicholas we hope to begin small groups for discipleship formation. In these groups there will be time for prayer, bible study, and conversation. We hope that as we study God's word and pray together we can deepen our relationship with God and focus on him. I encourage you to think and pray about joining or starting one of these small groups.

Where is Jesus in our lives? God's faithfulness to us never goes away. In our journey as disciples God is with us in each step of the way. God's focus is on us. Where is our focus?

Amen.

