

24th Week in OT Cycle B

Weekday 4/Thursday

1 Timothy 4:12-16, Luke 7:36-50

In parts of British Columbia, where the atmosphere is hot and humid, one can find *breathhtaking giant sequoia and redwood trees* serenely growing and seemingly reaching up into the heavens:

Those who know how to read the language of the trees say that they can tell a great deal of history by reading a cross section of one of these great trees once they've been cut down.

By pointing towards the rings of the tree *that emerge from the center outwards*, good naturalists will point out where there exists a ring that represents a year where there was a **terrible drought**. They will then compare that ring to another which reveals that there was *too much rain that year*. They can even show you a ring that represents a year when the tree was **struck by lightning**. It will show you *normal years of growth, a forest fire* that almost destroyed the tree and another time when the tree *suffered from a disease*.

Meanwhile, to the untrained eye, all these truths, all the things that the tree lived through "lies embedded within the heart" of the tree... Beneath its **skin**, its **appearance**, it's **fragile protective shell**.

And **THAT'S THE WAY IT IS WITH US** – for just a few minutes beneath the protective bark, *the concealing, protective mask* of our everyday appearance that we project into this world – are recorded **the rings of our lives**. *Times, events*, and *people* that have scarred us in ways that nobody else can tell...

For the most part, deeply concealed within the rings of our thoughts and emotions, the record is there; the memories are recorded, and in a very real way, they are all very much alive for every bit of drama we have ever experienced directly and deeply affects our concepts, feelings, and our relationships.

In short, they affect *the way we look at life, at God, at others and ourselves*.

If the Pharisees in today's gospel had the gift of **being able to read hearts**, like *naturalists can read the rings of a tree*, then perhaps they would not have been so harsh in their judgment of her. For they would have seen the events of life that she lived through which contributed, in no small way, to her demise.

But as so often happens in the Gospels, it is **ONLY JESUS WHO CAN SEE THIS WOMAN'S HEART**. *Only he* knew the events of life that had brought her to this place of heartache. *Only he* knew what she was really feeling.

While it's safe to say that **medical doctors** cannot see and/or read our hearts, *in order for their prescription to take effect*, they must piece together the events that led to our sickness. Receiving the proper medication lies completely on a proper analysis.

Jesus is the "**Divine Physician**" he knows everything about us and why we are the way that we are today. He also knows that there is a greater sickness to human beings which surpasses the physical world and that is the sickness of the soul... In short, the *spiritual, psychological, and emotional effects* that **SIN HAS IN OUR LIVES**.

And today we see the **Divine Physician** apply the only remedy that can heal and restore the rings of hurt and tragedy that we carry on the inside. It's a remedy that you cannot buy at the store, but rather comes from the **PHARMACY OF GOD'S FATHOMLESS MERCY**.

It's *only Jesus* can see inside every person's heart... It's *only Jesus* who can see God's heart...

And one thing more: **ONLY JESUS can forgive us and set us free from the shackles of sin**.

And in the **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION** that is exactly what our Lord and Master does for he is the only one who **sees broken hearts, who cares, forgives, heals, and makes whole**.