

Wheelbarrows

His fame had spread throughout the world and people had come in flocks to see him do his daring feats. They called him feather-foot Phil because he was the world's best tightrope walker, and he had a special event that afternoon in which he would traverse back and forth on the tight rope while it was suspended over a 256 ft waterfall. Before he began he asked the crowd: **"Do you believe I can do this?"** Loud cheering came from the crowd, **"Yea we believe you!"** and so feather-foot Phil proceeded to cross the tightrope effortlessly.

Then one of his assistants handed him an orange wheelbarrow and he asked the crowd again: **"Do you believe I can do this?"** and the crowd responded with greater energy this time, **"We believe you! You can do it!"** And once again he effortlessly traversed the tightrope with the wheelbarrow.

Then he asked the crowd one more time: **"I will now cross this tightrope with this wheelbarrow again but with a human being sitting in it. Do you believe that I can do this?!"** This time people were screaming and cheering at the top of their lungs; **"Yes! We believe in you!"** Then feather-foot Phil looked at the crowd and asked: **"Alright, who is my first volunteer?!"** *Silence....*

Sometimes we think of faith or belief JUST in terms of an intellectual assent or agreement, but in fact it requires much more of us, it requires not just the intellect, but **THE ENTRUSTMENT OF OUR ENTIRE BEING**, something akin to getting into a wheelbarrow over a 256 ft waterfall. And so Jesus looks at each of us today and he challenges us to have this type of faith and then he asks us: Who's wheelbarrow are you in?

In the Gospel today, Jesus rebukes his apostles for not being able to drive out the demon out of the little boy. Notice what he calls them: "O faithless and perverse generation!" That is a really harsh criticism. And if we look carefully at those words "faithless and perverse generation", we will actually see that it comes Deut 32:20.

Here Moses is speaking and listen to what he calls the Israelites who travelled in the desert with him:

And [the Lord] said, 'I will hide my face from them,
I will see what their end will be,

for they are a PERVERSE generation,
children in whom is no FAITHFULNESS (Deut 32:20).

Why did Moses regard his fellow Israelites in this way? Because he saw how the Lord freed them from the land of Egypt and how he placed them as the apple of his eyes and bore them up on eagles wings like a mother eagle taking care of her flock. The Lord fed them in the desert with honey from the rock and gave them the finest produce of the land and how did they repay him? ***They abandoned the Lord their God and worshipped idols*** (cf. Deut 32:15-18).

So when Jesus calls his disciples a perverse and faithless generation, is he accusing them of apostasy and idolatry? Not quite in that literal way, but Jesus is accusing them of an ***idolatry of the heart***. An idolatry which leads them to entrust themselves to their idols instead of Jesus Christ, an idolatry in which they get into the wheelbarrow of their idols.

This is a subtle shift of heart that can happen and we must be aware of the longings of our hearts. It just happened to me recently. Because I just got back from my retreat and my ordination is in two weeks, I've been frantically trying to invite some people personally through Facebook and after a couple of days I kept constantly checking my phone. I began to LOVE notifications, and it became like a small addiction. And we all know that we worship what we love and so I began to inadvertently worship Facebook. *I got into Mark Zuckerberg's wheelbarrow.*

So what are the things in your life that you didn't realize that you loved *inordinately*? Or that you loved *more* than God? To whom are you *entrusting your whole heart to seek fulfillment*? To whom or to *what* are you *inadvertently worshiping*? **Who's wheelbarrow are you in?**

Today you will receive in your heart the ***Divine Tightrope Walker*** who traversed from *heaven to the land of the dead and back to heaven again* on the ***Tightrope of the Cross***. In him we can truly entrust our entire being because he is faithful. Yet he beckons us today to make another act of faith, to renew our faith, not just with our LIPS and our MINDS but with our LIVES and our HEARTS. Jesus opens up the ***Wheelbarrow of his Most Sacred Heart*** and he looks at each one of us and says, *"Alright, who is my first volunteer?"*