

Sunday, March 1, 2015 – Mk 9:2-10 – 2nd Sunday of Lent
(Trust Walk - “Trust in me.”)

What is chance? Do our lives fit into some big puzzle; each of us a small piece being shaped and turned by someone trying to put it all together? Is life a series of random occurrences, or is there something more? These questions are reflections from a movie called “1000 to 1” about the real life story of Cory Wiessman.

Reflections as he looked back on his life when on March 26, 2009 his life would be changed forever. Cory had been the star basketball player at Jackson Memorial High School in New Jersey where he scored a staggering 1,071 points during his high school years. He was a top recruit for the basketball team at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania. He had everything going for him during his freshman year in college – his dream of playing college basketball was coming true, he was doing well at academics, and he had a loving family and friends. Then, on that one day in March 2009, his life changed forever. Cory was in the gym with his best friend and teammate working out prior to their next team practice. He had a headache that had persisted all day. In the gym, as he went to pick up a weight with his left hand, he could not lift the weight, his headache became as if a knife was going through his skull, he had blurred vision, and then within seconds the entire left side of his body became paralyzed. Cory was suffering a severe stroke at the age of only 19. Cory’s life changed on that day. Cory survived the first few

sketchy days after the stroke. Then, Cory started the long road to fight through surgeries and rehabilitation learning again basic motor skills and cognitive abilities we so easily take for granted. At the time early in his rehab, Cory's goal was to get back on the basketball court. What he didn't realize at that moment was that, what he was living through, would bring him far beyond his goal and would shape who he is meant to be as a person.

SCREEN: “Even though we might not always see it, everything happens for a reason” – Cory Weissman

Cory held onto the belief, through even the worst moments of his ordeal, that *“Even though we might not always see it, everything happens for a reason.”* His faith was strong in that he believed there must be a reason for how his life was unfolding in this challenge that he had never expected. Cory trusted in the greater plan that was meant for his life. Cory would work hard for the next three years as he continued college, continued rehab, and fought through seizures that were part of his brain's healing. Then, during Cory's senior year on February 11, 2012, during the last few seconds of his very last basketball game at Gettysburg College, Cory would get a chance to go play in the game for the first time since his stroke. He would make the single and only point of his college basketball career. But, he said that 1 point is far sweeter than the 1,071 points he had made during high school because it represented his hard journey to get there. It represented who he

was becoming. Cory trusted in the greater plan meant for his life, and embraced who he is meant to be in that plan.

SCREEN: [Picture – You Plans/God’s Plans]

This picture is something I think all of us can understand and apply to our life. We often set out in life on our own plan, a plan we naively expect that will be smooth and going onward and upward throughout our life, as the top of this picture shows.

I remember my life plan that I had typed out on my Commodore 64 computer when I was a high school senior. I had mapped out my entire life. I was going to get my first car in my senior year of high school, go on to college, be married soon after graduation, build a career in business, buy a house, have about four children, and, I even had in my plan the year I would retire and then live the rest of my years of life at the beach. Well, I was a young 17 year old then and quite naïve. And, as it ended up God certainly had other plans for my life.

We really have two paths in this life we can take. We can focus on all the things the secular world tries to tell us as to what’s important, such as focus on success of career, on money, and gaining possessions. Or, we can focus on the path when we go after something more, that we know in our heart and soul, we are meant to achieve. Where we seek the higher level of happiness and fulfillment that only a

life following God's plan can give to us. The reality of life is there is no smooth easy path to go through life. Life has its highs and lows. Life has its unexpected challenges. Believe me, I can attest to that! But, there are two things about how we can live life. We can either let life take us on, get wrapped up in the things of this world to guide and control us. Or, we can take life on. And, we can only truly take on and embrace life if we trust in the One who gave us our life. If we embrace a life trusting to walk with our Lord.

SCREEN: Trust Walk [main message screen]

We are in our second week of our Lenten message series called *Trust Walk*. We are reflecting during these 40 days of Lent that our Lord is calling us to walk with him in trust. A *Trust Walk* with our Lord is trusting him to lead us where we are meant to go. To trust him especially to lead us through anything that comes into our lives, especially the challenges and obstacles. Last week we reflected on that Christ asks us to walk with him. This week, we are reflecting on that Christ asks us to...

SCREEN: Trust in me!

Trust in me! To trust him in all that he asks of us; and to trust him to lead us through every aspect and obstacle in our lives. Today's Scripture readings are

examples of trusting the Lord. We hear this in our first reading from the Old Testament in the life of Abraham. When the God calls out to him, Abraham responds to the Lord...

SCREEN: “Here I am!”

“*Here I am!*” We hear God asking Abraham to sacrifice his own son. Can you imagine God asking you to do that? It would seem an impossible thing to even consider. God had promised Abraham that he would be the father of His chosen people. God had said to him, “I will make of you a great nation.” And, after a long time waiting, in their old age, God granted Abraham and his wife Sarah the birth of their son Isaac. But now God tests Abraham’s faith. God says to him...

SCREEN: “Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you.”

“*Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you.*” And, Abraham wholeheartedly trusts God’s plan. Abraham allowed God to lead him through a *Trust Walk* and Abraham passed the test, affirming his faith in God, and God allowing his son Isaac to live.

In today's Gospel we hear the story of the Transfiguration, when Jesus leads the Apostles Peter, James and John up a mountain to witness an incredible vision. Jesus is transfigured before them, and Moses and Elijah appear in the clouds. Then, God the Father's voice is heard from the heavens saying...

SCREEN: "This is my beloved son. Listen to him."

"This is my beloved son. Listen to him." Could you imagine being there? How incredible that must have been. And, how do the three Apostles react? They want to stay there on the mountain, and who could blame them. Peter, James and John had followed Jesus for three years, hearing his teachings, seeing him perform miracles, and now on that mountain they witness the power, glory and transfiguration of Jesus before them. They see the affirmation that their Lord Jesus Christ is their Messiah. But, God's plan was not to stay on that mountain.

SCREEN: [Picture – three crosses at Calvary]

Jesus was to lead Peter, James and John down the mountain and lead them to witness God's plan continue to unfold as he would lead them soon to Calvary. Jesus would ask the Apostles to continue their *Trust Walk* and follow him. The same *Trust Walk* Jesus is asking us to take with him.

When you look at your life, whose plan would you say are you following? Would you say you are following your own plan? Or, would you say you are following God's plan? If we are honest, we are all probably following some of both plans. But, if we are believers in living a life following Jesus Christ, then we need to strive to follow God's plan in our lives. We need to make that *Trust Walk* with Him in order to lead us where He wants us to go – where we are meant to go.

Lent is a particularly special time when we can work towards getting closer to the Lord and move further along in our *Trust Walk* with him. Last weekend we had over 50 people sign up for our new Lenten Small Groups, which will meet five times over the next five weeks to be with each and help each other grow a little further in their relationship with the Lord. If you weren't here because of the weather we had last weekend, you can still sign up for a Lenten Small Group today after Mass in the vestibule of the Church. Another way to get closer to the Lord during Lent...

SCREEN: The Stations of the Cross

...is to pray *The Stations of the Cross*. The Stations of the Cross began in medieval times by St. Francis of Assisi to commemorate Jesus' final hours – to commemorate the Passion of the Lord. If you visit Jerusalem today you can walk

the road Jesus walked and you can pray at the 14 stations along the way. Every Catholic Church, including ours, has Stations of the Cross inside of the church. Our Stations begin to the left of the hallway doors and go down one side of the church and up the other side of the church. Every Friday during Lent at 7:30 pm you can come here and pray the stations together with the parish community. Or, you can pray them on your own any time. For this Lent and for our *Trust Walk* message series, we wanted to do something special with the Stations of the Cross. We asked 14 members of our parish to write a personal reflection on one of the Stations. Prayers for each station, along with these parishioner reflections, were compiled into this booklet. We have copies for you at the doors of the church to take with you and use during Lent to pray the Stations of the Cross. And, in addition to the 14 Stations in the church, we have created 14 Stations outside of the church along the grounds to the right side of the church. There are 14 paving stones, each with a number, where you can stop and pray each of the 14 prayers and reflections for the Stations. Praying and walking the Stations helps us to reflect on the sacrifice Jesus Christ made for each of us, and helps to lead us on our own path in walking with the Lord.

Pope Francis recently spoke about the importance of praying the Stations of the Cross. He gave the following eight reasons why to pray the Stations of the Cross:

- SCREEN:**
- 1 They allow us to place our trust in Him**
 - 2 They put us into the story**
 - 3 They remind us that Jesus suffers with us**
 - 4 They compel us to action**
 - 5 They help us make a decision for or against Christ**
 - 6 They reveal God's response to evil in the world**
 - 7 They give us the certainty of God's love for us**
 - 8 They guide us from the cross to the resurrection**

These reasons capture a lot of what going through Lent is about, and capture a lot of the goals of our *Trust Walk* message series. When we walk with Christ, we then learn to trust him to lead us. When we walk with Christ, we then allow God's plan to unfold in our lives.

My mom always told me that living the Catholic faith is not the easy road to follow and that it takes work.

SCREEN: “Nothing works unless you do.” – Cory Weissman

The young man Cory Weissman that faced a huge challenge in his life and ended up on the other side of his stroke saying he feels blessed as the ‘new’ person it made him, says he lives by the motto: “*Nothing works unless you do.*” Let us work at our faith and take the steps in our *Trust Walk* that our Lord is asking us to take with him. Let us allow him to lead us to the place where we are meant to be in God's amazing plan for His creation. Amen!