Lent 3 A

MDP of God

There was a recent movie entitled Hacksaw Ridge---“it’s a 2016 [biographical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biographical_film) [war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_film) drama about the [World War II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II) experiences of [Desmond Doss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desmond_Doss), an American [pacificist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacificist) [combat medic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combat_medic) who refused to carry or use a firearm or weapons of any kind. Doss became the first [conscientious objector](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscientious_objector) to be awarded the [Medal of Honor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal_of_Honor), for service above and beyond the call of duty during the [Battle of Okinawa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Okinawa).—He rescued over 75 soldiers from certain death

 *He was certainly an unlikely war hero*

When I read this weekend’s readings—the 1st thought that hit me was “unlikely heroes”

Look at our gospel—this lady is a Samaritan (and of course the Jewish people generally hated the Samaritans—they saw them as half breeds and traitors)

Why? Because they were descendants of the ten tribes of the Israelites who had cut themselves off from the Kingdom of David

They had been conquered over the years and intermarried with their conquerors—*and worst of all*—**they had adopted many of the pagan ways and participated in pagan worship**

So the Jewish people saw them as traitors to God—traitors to their heritage—traitors to the covenant

But in today’s gospel Jesus speaks to this Samaritan woman—*something that was unheard of in that day*

We’ll hear later in the preface of the Mass how Jesus *had a thirst for her faith*

 And she comes to faith in Jesus and then tells everyone about Him

 *And as we heard she wasn’t exactly “Woman of the year” material*

She had been married five times—she was shacked up with some guy at this point

 And Jesus knew that—He’s the one who points that out in our gospel today

He says to her, and I quote—“"You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband.' For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true."

And she of course responds to Him and says, “You sir are obviously a busybody—sticking your nose into other people’s business”

 **No—she doesn’t say that**

But that’s probably what a lot of people would have said

No—she says, “"Sir, I can see that you are a prophet.”

 *She recognizes her faults—her failures—her sins*

If she hadn’t done that –she couldn’t have become God’s instrument in the world—*but she did become an instrument of the Lord leading others to faith*

The fact is Jesus had a great thirst for her to come to faith

And she came to realize that the only one who could fill **her deepest thirst** stood before her—the Lord—the long awaited Savior

But if she had responded with anger to His words—if she had lashed out at Him that He was a busybody—if she had walked away in anger—*she never could have become a hero of the faith*

**And that is what she is**—how many people did she lead to faith?—We don’t know for sure—but she led her whole town to come to know the Savior of the world---*that’s a pretty good days work*

**She was an unlikely hero**

The same is true in our 1st reading today

 Moses was certainly an unlikely hero for the Israelites

 They had been slaves—*but Moses grew up in the lap of luxury*

 He was adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter as an infant

 He didn’t experience the forced labor of his kinfolk

 He didn’t know the humiliation of slavery

*He grew up as the grandson of the king—*He grew up in a palace—He grew up with servants at his beck and call

And yet he’s the man God called to lead His people to freedom—and he didn’t want the job—he said, Oh Lord—not me—I’m not a good speaker—I can’t face Pharaoh”—*but he very reluctantly obeys the Lord’s call*

And we heard in this 1st reading that it wasn’t always easy for Moses—the people rather than being grateful for how he led them out of slavery—they were constantly complaining to him and about him

 Massah means Testing

Meribah means Dissatisfaction

**Well Moses was certainly tested**—*he led these people out of slavery*—think of that, for 400 years they had been slaves with little hope that they would one day be freed---and then Moses is sent by God to free them---and what do they do? We heard in our 1st reading:

In those days, in their thirst for water, the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?"

*So Egypt is now the good old days*—**being slaves was the good old days**

But as we continue to read this story—not only do we hear of God’s faithfulness—which we heard of in today’s reading –we heard of God’s loving these people who constantly complained about him—and God giving them water to drink and later food to eat—*in a miraculous way*

But as the story goes on, *we’ll hear of Moses loving these people—Moses standing up for these people who constantly complained about him*

At one point—after the sin of the golden calf—God says to Moses—“I’m going to destroy these faithless people Moses—and then I’ll start again with you”

 *And Moses intercedes for the people*

 Moses asks for God to forgive them – to give them another chance

A lesser man would have said—“I don’t blame you God—I’m fed up with them too—just wipe them out”—but Moses doesn’t do that—he stands up for his people

Again, he’s an unlikely hero

The fact is my friends—all of us in this church today –could be, with God’s grace, heroes of the faith

I believe it was St Catherine of Sienna who said—“*if you become what God made you to be, you would set the world on fire”*

We hear things like that and we often think—“I couldn’t do that—look at all the mistakes I’ve made—I’m a sinner”

OR “I couldn’t do that, I’m only a plumber, an electrician, a stay at home mom….whatever”—I couldn’t do that”

 But what the bible tells us over and over again is—yes you can

Moses was certainly an unlikely hero—and yet here we are 3500 years later—talking about what he did

This lady in the gospel—was certainly an unlikely hero—and here we are 2,000years later talking about what she did

All you need to do is open your heart to the grace of God—love Jesus—and tell others about Him

 Tell others how He gives you hope

 How He gives your life meaning

 How your faith gives you such great joy and consolation

Now if your faith doesn’t give you joy and consolation—*well you need to work on that—that’s a problem*

My friends we live in a world that often appears to be falling apart---and the biggest problem is that so many people don’t know Jesus—don’t know His truth—don’t know that their lives are meant to be filled with meaning

So many people are wandering in the darkness with no hope—no joy—no real peace---they live with a deep thirst---*a thirst that only God can satisfy*

And they need someone who will lead them to Jesus— so that thirst can be satisfied---who will lead the to the truth—who will lead them to faith

**And you can do that—**Desmond Doss in that true life movie Hacksaw Ridge—became a hero because he saved the physical life of 75 men

 **He risked his life to do it**

You might have to risk criticism—who might face some snide comments—you might face some rejection and ridicule if you share your faith with others---*but you know*—**you’ll live**

You can save the souls of countless people---like St Catherine said, “if you become what you are meant to be, you will set the world on fire”--all you need to do—is love Jesus and share your love of Jesus with others

So many of the saints did that—some in great ways—*but many in very little ways*

You might not get the Congressional Medal of Honor—but you can save the soul of even just one person---you’ll be a hero in the eyes of God

This Samaritan woman in today’s gospel—was an unlikely hero—but she saved the souls of many people—she led many to saving faith

You can with God’s grace be an unlikely hero who leads others to salvation as well

My friends—God’s looking for some heroes—please please please---**be one of them**