

I was reading an article this week about Albert Einstein. We all know this name—that brilliant physicist born in Germany in 1879. He is perhaps most famous for his theory of general relativity. When asked to explain this theory in terms that average people would understand, he said this, “Thirty seconds seems like a long time if you are sitting on a hot stove, but it does not seem long at all if you are sitting on a pretty girl's lap. You see? Everything is relative.”

Very recently, physicists have disproven one of Einstein's theories involving wrinkles in the universe and the creation of matter. It turns out, scientists claim, about 20% of Einstein's theories are wrong. This has shocked me. Einstein, arguably one of the the smartest men in the history of the world was wrong 20% of the time? A neighbor pointed out to me that he was still right 80% of the time. And he's right, 4 out of 5 times, Einstein is right....but what if that one time he was wrong could have saved your life? I found this unsettling—20% failure rate seems high for a genius. After all, if you can't trust Einstein's theories, what can you trust?

Our money says, “In God we trust.” And that's clearly where our trust *should* be, in God. But it seems somehow we've gotten turned around, and we trust the money more than we trust the God whose name it carries.

Where, then, should our trust lie, if not in our scientists or in our money?

Of course, we know our trust should lie in God. But why is that so often simply

not the case?

The people in today's Gospel don't know the answer to that any more than we do. They don't know whom to trust, especially when things go wrong. Like with this blind man. Everyone is more interested in blame than trust. The man is blind from birth, and all folks want to know is who's fault this is. And that's not really so hard to relate to...we, too, spend a lot of time trying to lay blame when things go wrong than to trust that God will somehow navigate us through whatever mess we might be in.

I am not good at this.

And I wonder if I am not alone. I think I'm not. We Christians should know better than anyone that when things in life get messy, we should trust God. We of all people should not waste precious time blaming others or ourselves for this mess or that misfortune. But it seems, when push comes to shove, we fall short in the trust department...

...our vision gets cloudy...our eyes play tricks on us...we go blind to the truth...we lose our way..

They say when you lose one sense, the other senses sharpen in order to make up for the deficiency. Is that true, I wonder? If we lose our sense of sight, does our sense of hearing grow sharper? Is that why when we feel blind in life, we listen to all of the clamoring and confusing voices around us, and we don't know which to follow, because they are all so sharp, so demanding, and we are unable to discern the wise voice from

the foolish one?

I've been that blind man. And I'll bet you have been, too. It's not a bad thing to confess it; after all, that's why we're here. This is a place for truth-telling. We often forget that in this paranoid, PC world in which we live. For example, at Christian's class Halloween party a few years ago, we were playing a little game where the students toss small plastic pumpkins into a big pumpkin in order to win a prize. Christian made the comment that all of the rest of his classmates did better than he did, even Morgan, whom he pointed to and loudly said, "and she's even *blind*!" I cringed and automatically tried to shush him.

"Why are you shushing me? She *knows* she's blind!" Christian said loudly.

Morgan nodded and said, "It's true, I know I'm blind!"

Wow. The courage we can learn from our children. To be brave enough to name the times in life when we are blind. To be unafraid to call out for help in the darkness. To boldly grasp a guiding hand. To be able to proclaim to the world, "I am lost right now, and I don't have any idea where I'm going."

What we wouldn't give for a spiritual GPS, or a spiritual Garmin...that can simply command, "Turn left and go three miles, then turn right. Go another two miles, and Jesus will be on your left."

It's hard to feel blind in life, to not know where to turn, how to proceed. For the ones I know and counsel, it's a terrifying thing sometimes to simply get out of bed and

put your feet on the floor.

But there is grace in times of blindness. There is a glimmer of light, a ray of hope. Sometimes hope comes from reading a book, sometimes we find hope in a movie. Most of the time, God sends his hope to us through other people.

These are the ones that show up when you need a friend more than anything else in the world. These are the ones who call out of the blue just when you are feeling most desperate. These are the ones who say to you, “You've been on my mind, and I'm not sure why.” This is God's Holy Spirit, sending you beacons of light in the midst of your darkness. This is God's Holy Spirit working overtime to surround you with flesh and blood proof that you are not alone. This is God's Holy Spirit whispering into the ears of friends, “Get up and go to your friend who sits alone in the blackness, and reach out your hand to them.”

I was visiting a lovely lady this week and she asked me if I knew what verse in the Bible was exactly in the middle. I said no. She said, “It's Psalm 118, verse 8.” That verse says this, “It is better to trust the LORD than to trust in humans.” If this verse lies at the very heart of the Bible, perhaps it should lie in our very hearts. To trust that God is working tirelessly, unceasingly to lead you out of your darkness....to trust that God will navigate you through whatever mess you are in...to trust that God will not abandon you, ever, no matter if you are blind, deaf, lame, mute, demon-possessed, depressed, addicted, bitter, stubborn, selfish, lonely—whatever...God will always be with you,

ushering you through this life and into the next.

God can take your blame. God can endure your rejection. God can handle your accusation, your lack of faith, your skepticism. God doesn't love you all because you can sing and dance for him. God wants you to trust him because he will still love you when you can't sing or dance or hear or see..and that's amazing grace....and it remains long after Einstein's theories fail and our monetary system fails and our governments crumble...after everything that we know and wrongly trust falls apart, God's grace remains.