## ST. MT. 9: 9-13 THE GREAT TURN AROUND

OUR GOD IS A GOD OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE & ACCEPTANCE! HE DOES NOT LOVE YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE GOOD OR BEAUTIFUL OR SMART OR RICH. GOD LOVES YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE!..... THE LOVE OF GOD IS NOT SENTIMENTALISM. THE LOVE OF GOD IS NOT ROMANTICISM. THE LOVE OF GOD IS BASED ON A DECISION – A DECISION THAT IS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH YOUR WELL-BEING REGARDLESS OF YOUR STATUS OR CONDITION..... HUMAN LOVE TENDS TO LOVE THE LOVELY, THE LOVING, THE LOVABLE. GOD'S LOVE LOVES THE UNLOVING, THE UNLOVABLE, THE UNLOVELY. HUMAN LOVE SAYS, I WILL LOVE YOU IF..... GOD'S LOVE SAYS, I WILL LOVE YOU EVEN..... OUR WHOLE MINISTRY HERE AT HOLY CROSS IS TO KEEP ON AFFIRMING OVER & OVER THAT GOD'S GRACE & LOVE IS GREATER THAN ALL OUR SIN! WE HERE AT HOLY CROSS OPEN OUR ARMS TO EVERYBODY WHO HEARS THE CALL OF JESUS TO THE OUTCASTS LIKE MT.: FOLLOW ME / I'LL HELP YOU MAKE THE GREAT TURN AROUND!

Danny DeVito

IN JESUS' DAY THE PHARISEES & OTHER COMMITTED JEWS WOULD GO INTO THE TEMPLE OR STAND ON A STREET CORNER & PRAY LOUDLY: GOD, I THANK YOU THAT I AM NOT A GENTILE OR A SAMARITAN OR A WOMAN! AND I'M SURE TAX COLLECTORS WERE NOT FAR DOWN ON THE LIST – THESE JEWISH TRAITORS WHO LINED THEIR POCKETS WITH ROMAN TAX MONEY. THE ABUSE GOT SO BAD THAT THE TAX COLLECTORS WERE NOT EVEN PERMITTED TO GO INTO THE TEMPLE FOR WORSHIP..... SO WHEN JESUS IS WALKING ALONG & SEES MATTHEW SITTING IN A TAX BOOTH & SAYS, FOLLOW ME, THIS IS UNPRECEDENTED. HE INVITES MATTHEW TO MAKE THE GREAT TURN AROUND, THE GREAT ABOUT FACE..... WE ALL HAVE OUR OWN STORY TO TELL. I HAVE OFTEN SAID I WOULD NOT WISH MY PAST LIFE ON MY WORST ENEMY, BUT I WOULD NOT TRADE IT 'FOR ALL THE TEA IN CHINA' EITHER. MY PAST HAS BROUGHT ME CLOSER TO THE LOVE & GRACE & MERCY OF GOD AS IT IS FOUND IN J.C. IT HAS OPENED MY EARS TO REALLY LISTEN TO HIS INVITATION: FOLLOW ME & REALLY TURN MY LIFE AROUND!..... DO YOU REMEMBER THAT OTHER TAX COLLECTOR

SHE LEFT, SHE HAD A YOUNG

RUNNING OVER IN HER HEART. JESUS MADE THE GREAT TURN AROUND IN HER LIFE BY TELLING HER: YOU HAVE HAD 5 HUSBANDS & THE ONE YOU ARE SHACKING UP WITH NOW IS NOT YOUR HUSBAND. YOU CAN FOLLOW ME NOW & BE MY WITNESS. SHE GOES BACK HOME & SAYS TO EVERYONE WHO WILL LISTEN, COME, SEE A MAN WHO TOLD ME EVERYTHING I HAVE EVER DONE..... DO YOU REMEMBER MARY MAGDALENE WHO HAD 7 DEVILS IN HER? SHE MET JESUS & HEARD HIS WORDS, FOLLOW ME AND MADE THE GREAT TURN AROUND & BECAME THE FIRST ANNOUNCER OF THE RESURRECTION..... HERE, A GROUP OF PHARISEES SEE JESUS EATING IN MT.'S HOUSE WITH OTHER TAX COLLECTORS & SINNERS & THEY CRITICIZE JESUS FOR KEEPING SUCH COMPANY. AND JESUS MAKES HIS PURPOSE & MINISTRY CRYSTAL CLEAR: I DIDN'T COME HERE FOR PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY ARE RIGHTEOUS. I CAME HERE FOR PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEY ARE SINNERS & NEED TO REPENT & MAKE THE GREAT TURN AROUND.

THOMAS MERTON, THE TRAPPIST MONK, SAID, WE ALL HAVE TWO SELVES. WE HAVE THE PUBLIC SELF WHICH IS THE FALSE SELF THAT WE PROJECT & WANT PEOPLE TO SEE / WE PUT THE BEST FOOT FORWARD TO IMPRESS OTHERS / AND WE HAVE OUR PRIVATE SELF WHICH IS OUR REAL SELF, COVERED WITH LAYERS OF EMBARRASSMENT / SHAME / ANGER / FRUSTRATION / FAILURE / MISERY. THAT'S THE SELF GOD SAYS, BRING THAT SELF TO ME! I'LL HELP YOU MAKE THE GREAT TURN AROUND! THOUGH YOUR SINS ARE AS SCARLET, I'LL MAKE THEM AS WHITE AS SNOW!

HERE AT HOLY CROSS WE BRING BEFORE GOD OUR PRIVATE SELVES BECAUSE WE HAVE ALL BEEN HUMPTY DUMPTIES! WE HAVE ALL *SAT ON THE WALL / HAD A GREAT FALL / & ALL THE KING'S HORSES & ALL THE KING'S MEN COULD NOT PUT US TOGETHER AGAIN.* YOU NOTICE THAT NOTHING IS SAID HERE ABOUT OUR KING! JESUS CHRIST IS LORD OF LORDS & KING OF KINGS WHO CAN & DOES PUT YOU BACK TOGETHER AGAIN TO MAKE THE GREAT TURN AROUND!