

On channel 5, twice a day at 11 am and 3 pm, you can watch him do his thing.

He has degrees in psychology, experimental psychology, and clinical psychology – but he doesn't have a license to practice psychology.

He brings in people with the most dysfunctional lives, histories, and personalities; and puts it on national television for all of us to see.

He got his television start on the Oprah show in 1998 as her Tuesday "Relationship and Life Strategy Expert." And in 2002, spun off to have his own weekday show. He is pretty well known for asking lots of questions - the most regular one being: "How's that working for you?"

I'm talking about Phil McGraw, known to millions of people as "Dr. Phil." Maybe you've seen his show. Maybe you've read his book. Maybe you've read about him in a magazine or online.

In the First Reading, the Prophet Amos speaks to those in Zion who are complacent. They take care of themselves, but don't really lose any sleep over other people's problems. The Lord tells them, through the prophet, that they will lose it all and end up in exile.

And in the Gospel we hear the parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus. The rich man who never seemed to notice the poor man in front of his door covered in sores.

IN FRONT OF HIS DOOR?

Talk about "tripping" over something, or tripping over someone.

And in the afterlife, the Rich Man finds the circumstances reversed. NOT because he was rich, but rather, because he didn't care.

I can almost see the Rich Man and Lazarus coming back from the great beyond and being guests on Dr. Phil's show.

HOW'S THAT WORKING FOR YOU?

In the parable, the wealthy man appeared to have it all together. The abundance of his surrounding, perhaps his savvy business sense. He was most likely the envy of his neighbors, and consulted in many things.

But the DYSFUNCTION in this man's life was his lack of compassion. And you wonder if it may have been deeper than compassion. He was so hardened to what was right under his nose, that he failed to notice the man lying on his doorstep who needed help.

All of us have areas in our lives where we have it together. And all of us have areas of our lives where we don't have it together.

Sometimes in our lives, we reach a point where we want to pretend we have it together, but we really don't. And instead of seeking help, or seeking to help - as the case may be - we ignore the problem and keep on acting as though we have it together.

In some cases, what's wrong is RIGHT UNDER OUR NOSES. And we ignore it, first through an act of the will, and later on through force of habit.

We need a wake up call of sorts - maybe we need to imagine ourselves on Dr. Phil's show ... and after he points out to us what is SO OBVIOUS to others, he can ask us: HOW'S THAT WORKING FOR YOU?

The answer to what may end up being SPIRITUAL DYSFUNCTION is found in the first line of today's Second Reading from St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy:

*But you, man [or woman] of God, pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness.*

The word RIGHTEOUSNESS here in the Greek is *dikaiosynē* which in a narrow sense can mean JUSTICE or BALANCE - giving each person their due.

But in a larger sense means "integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking feeling, and acting."

Already in the first reading, it's a LONG LIST OF THINGS. When we break out the list, it gets even longer.

Today as we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us as for a deepening of our own RIGHTEOUSNESS. The RIGHTEOUSNESS that comes to us through GRACE from JESUS CHRIST - through His Sacrifice on the Cross, and through the Sacraments we have received and will receive.

If there's anything on that list that we're not sure we want ... or something on that list that we know we're not living up to ... ask yourself the question: HOW'S THAT WORKING FOR YOU?

And if you're ready to change ... if you're ready to drop those things ... if you're ready to become the WOMAN OR MAN OF GOD that God is calling you to be ... then tap into the supernatural grace available to you in the Sacraments - Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Matrimony, [Holy Orders], Anointing ... and let JESUS MAKE THINGS WORK FOR YOU.

And then and only then can you know that you will

*Compete well for the faith.*

or as it is rendered in other translations:

*Fight the good fight of the faith*

and be able to

*Lay hold of eternal life, to which you were called*