

Lenten Reflections - 2

March 23, 2022

Piano prelude: Let There be Peace on Earth

Prayer

Lord please be with us in our own personal journey during Lent. As we listen to your voice may each of us be guided in a way that not only makes our lives better but also makes the lives of others better.

Hymn: MV 65 When We Are Tested

Scripture: Isaiah 58:6-9

The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives. Then my favour will shine on you like the morning sun and your wounds will quickly be healed. I will always be with you on every side. When you pray, I will answer you. When you call to me, I will respond.

Dialogue

We are now well into the season of Lent. How is your journey going? Have you made time to set aside at least 5 minutes a day to sit in silence and listen for that soft voice of God? I hope you will continue this practice.

We all need down time even when we are not busy – this is different – it is developing the art of prayer and dutiful listening. Blocking out the noise of daily living to connect with God.

Let us go back to over 2000 years ago and Jesus is still in the desert. He is still fasting, and he is praying and being taunted by the devil, and he is not giving into the promises the devil is making. He is keeping strong to his purpose – to do what God wants him to do. Or were there times when he just wanted to give into his human needs and limp back to civilization or use his powers to give him a life of luxury giving no thought to the people that needed him. But he did not give into these fake promises.

I believe that one of the points of Jesus's time in the desert or wilderness was to examine his life and realize that even though he was human – shedding the extra things was not difficult for him. His hunger was not just for food it was for prayer and connection to God. At Lent we are asked to give up things that we love – chocolate, coffee, and other favourite things; however, we are asked to take that money saved and

use it for good works. And right now, there are so many causes that can use these donations.

Hymn: MV: 79: Spirit, Open My Heart.

Reflection

When I was on the walk for The Coldest Night with Rev Dave, Graham and Marilyn – we walked on the rows between the crosses on Paris Street– I noted that the crosses were all made the same – but each one was also so different with the names and the decorations lovingly placed and at one cross I stumbled in the snow and I touched the cross and I felt a jolt and I heard a voice saying – Thank you for being here – let people know that I did not die in vain. I continued in silence reflecting on what I heard.

There was silence in that walk for part of the time even with the windy conditions whipping up the snow and the traffic flowing by. And I thought of Jesus wandering in that desert knowing that he when he returned the events that would follow.

Jesus is asking us to be patient – to not hurry with our lives but to take the time to pray and reflect. Not to physically fast like he did but to pare our lives down and listen – to strip away the layers of dust and be the person we know we can be with God's help.

Prayer

May Your light guide our day, and your spirit bring us peace.

May what we have given up today remind us of our dependence on You for all the blessings that we enjoy.

And may we stand in solidarity today with all of our brothers and sisters around the world, especially with those in Ukraine who are suffering at the hands of people who do not know Your love for all. May we be united in Your love and continue to work towards Your Kin-dom here on earth.

And may each of us name a person that needs help today – we ask you, God, bless them abundantly today and throughout Lent.

Hymn: MV 126: Are you a Shepherd