

We are nearly half way through lent and it is time to step back and explore the journey that we are taking. It is time to look back to see where we have come from, time to look at our present state as well as peering into the future.

The Lenten journey was not produced randomly by our forefathers, it wasn't a random monk or group of monks who randomly pulled stories to fill each week, I'm a firm believer that the Holy Spirit led our forefathers in arranging the journey that we are all undertaking.

The beginning of lent sees the church presenting to us the Gospel of Preparation, where the church teaches its children, to look up towards heaven and call on the almighty Father. It is only when we can do this with all humility and honesty that we can move on with our Journey.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> week sees the church preaching to its children, that if our attention is solely focused on the Father, then we must give up our worldly possessions and build for ourselves treasures in heaven where no moth or rust destroys. Money indeed is the source of all evil, but good works, faith and prayer that come with calling on the name of our father in heaven - is the currency of heaven.

Having established our aim to achieve our stake in heaven the church turns our attention to what can prevent us from achieving this worthy aim. We see in the story of Temptation how Satan tempts us with earthly mansions, earthly goods and earthly glories. Unfortunately many fall for these temptations which destroy our journey to heaven. Temptation my friend is good if we think about it, it draws us closer to our Father. However we have to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Father, not by bread alone.

Having been made aware of temptation, the church acknowledges that some of its flock will become blind to the worthy cause. Temptation leads to prodigal living and that is indeed what our church places as the focus of this week. The prodigal son is every man that has fallen into temptation we must return to the open embrace of our heavenly father. The question is raised are we prodigal, the answer is personal.

So having acknowledged that prodigal living only provides temporal satisfaction of desire, man seeks to find eternal joy and glory which can only be found in the fountain of life that is Jesus. The Samaritan woman symbolises all of humanity who have tried to find externally eternal pleasure outside of God, to no avail. Jesus awaits us at the well, he does the hard yards and stretches out his hand and proclaims whoever drinks from my water will have everlasting life, a fountain of living water.

However not all accept this open embrace of our Lord, many refuse to see the danger of sin, they become paralysed by its holding cripple. A sin that is loved is impossible to overcome leading to full paralysis physically and spiritually. The church indeed recognises this and sets for us the scene that only in Jesus we can find healing and a cure from sinful paralysis. The church encourages its children to hear the word of the Lord, get up and walk. Even if paralysed for 38 years there is hope in our Lord.

Towards the end of the journey, some of the flock seem to have missed the whole point of it. Weeks have past, the passion is at the door step and resurrection is all but a certainty. The Church attempts a final attempt to awaken people from spiritual blindness, we are encouraged to journey with the blind man, feel his clay and wash in Siloam.

The Stench of sin is our final reminder, in this epic conclusion of lent. Lazarus is dead - he symbolises the effects of sin and man – his separation from his creator. A stark reminder of the lack of repentance and its consequences. Let us not get to this stage having not benefited from lent and experienced the presence of our lord during this wonderful Journey.

My Friends lent isn't about the food that we don't eat, it's about experiencing God.

Stay Tuned for the Journey Through Passion Week, Coming Soon.