

Bible Study
Second Sunday in Lent, Year C
February 21, 2016

[RCL] Genesis 15:1-12,17-18; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35; Psalm 27

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Abraham is suffering from tunnel vision. Although he is a spirit filled man who is devoted to God, Abraham's vision is only focused on what is immediately in front of him. Abraham hasn't yet submitted to God's will and allowed God to open his eyes to see the effects of God unending love and possibility. Abraham's myopia leads him to focus on the fact that he is childless and what he currently owns. Thus, God's promise of offspring that would number the stars of the sky and ownership of vast amounts of land is beyond his human understanding. But this is the crux of the passage; Abraham is still walking by sight and not by faith. Submitting to God's will necessarily means that we must also place full trust and faith in the Lord. The perfect and complete cure to human spiritual myopia is faith in the abundance grace of the Holy Trinity.

- What are the material and earthly things that must be abandoned in order to walk by faith and not by sight?
- What sources or people do you rely on for spiritual clarity of thought and guidance?

Psalm 27

Glorious is the Lord who is the rock of our salvation and our stronghold in times of distress. The psalmist seems to be deeply troubled in his reflection and plea for God's mercy in Psalm 27. Troubled by the threat of armies, enemies and false witnesses God is the common denominator who can provide an escape route in the face of suffering, harm and persecution. In a cry for help and protection, the writer seeks the paternal attributes of God for protection and reassurance. If there is one psalm that accentuates what it means to the beneficiary of God's grace on earth, Psalm 27 is it.

- As we celebrate the joy of being members of the kingdom of God, how do we describe the common denominator in our spiritual life (God)?
- Conversely, reflecting on our lives, how do you think God would describe us?

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Saint Paul, formerly chief persecutor now converted chief advocate for Christians offers a warning to "enemies of the cross of Christ". That is, if you place your minds on earthly things, your glory will be shame and destruction. Saint Paul, to the members of the church in Philippi draws a divisive line between earthly gains and heavenly reward. The citizenship of value is not on earth but in heaven with our Lord of Savior Jesus Christ. The busyness of this world dictates that we are wrapped in trying to assert, redefine or identify the role in the communities in which we live. We assert our identity through citizenship, community, social groups, religion, family and friends. Our membership in these various groups drives our earthly existence daily.

- How often do we consider what it takes to acquire and maintain membership in heaven?
- What are the specific requirements that Jesus Christ demands from us to obtain the eternal citizenship in heaven?

Luke 13:31-35

George Webb in his hymn *Stand up Stand up for Jesus* was persuasive when he wrote, “from victory unto victory his army shall he lead, till every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed”. In our reading today, Jesus Christ faces familiar foes in the Pharisees. Even though Jesus is performing miracles to the benefit of the community, the religious elite wants no part of it or him. In response Christ is resilient, defiant and brave as he insists that God’s work is paramount to any request or law from the Herod or the Pharisees. Jesus’ stance is a reminder that in following him we are called to stand up for justice, love and the welfare of our surrounding communities. This may mean forsaking loved ones/friends, defying societal norms or doing the unpopular. It also means spirit-filled joy, countless blessings and an abundance of grace.

- In what ways do you see yourself following Jesus and standing up for Jesus?
- How do you stand up for justice and love?
- When is it difficult to do that? When might it be easy?

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