

“Now is the Time – Build my Temple”.

Week I Fasting – Burning down the house to Build up a temple

Matt 4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’^[b]”

How can we stand up to the sneaky and powerful forces that seek to suck us into choosing distraction of idols over the foundation of God. What are we to build His temple (our lives) on, sinking sand or on the rock. Only one place to find the rock that is higher than me:

Jesus! He is calling us to be his Disciples:

A little further down in Matthew Chapter 4

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

¹⁸ As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹ Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, not to them Jesus called them and he is calling each one of us.

²² and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus calls us all to follow him. We are also blessed to help others follow Jesus. Most are not called to leave their vocation, though some are. The disciples heeded the call and were ALL In for JC. Jesus CALLED them to leave or fast from fishing and follow Him. He was replacing their needs with His provisions.

God does that for us too when we give him what he deserves. A Catholic brother, Pat Merrin shared in an Ash Wednesday message that "Fasting makes space in the soul by challenging our addictions, which clamor constantly to be fed. The compound effect of self-satisfaction only increases that craving then leads to stupor or disappointment. Fasting is about clarity, simplicity, traveling light, purification. It is its own reward, but also overflows into an awareness of others."

Paraphrasing - In our greater capacity we are able to give out of our freed up resources to those in need which blesses everyone.

"Still, Lent is less self-help than a journey. Every disciple sets out on the road to the Cross because Jesus wants us to be with him when He accomplishes His mission. He will fulfill the Law and the Prophets by emptying Himself, accepting the full burden of human failure and its consequences in order to lift up the world in glory. Lent is a school of love that enables us to follow him, imitate him, share this mission. "

True love is being at our best for God and others. Fasting from something you think you love or need, but really don't, says yes God, I am ready to follow you more fully. Look everyone here is following God or wants to or you wouldn't be here. Realizing that there are levels of following Jesus and of our faith, helps us know we can continue to "level up" more and more into the likeness of Jesus as we willingly surrender strongholds in our life to God. It's very important in our walks and journeys to recognize that there are things that seem good that could become a distraction or idol before God. When it is shown to us, let's pray to God for the will power, the desire and perseverance to begin & complete our fast and that our sacrifice would be pleasing to Him.

SO remember when we read the Disciples left their boats to follow Jesus. After His death and resurrection this happened...

Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish

John 21 *Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.^[a] It happened this way: ² Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, John, James, and two other disciples were together. ³ "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.*

Great, the gang leader Peter gets them all back in the boat –aka off the wagon

⁴ *Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.*

⁵ *He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"*

"No," they answered.

I Picture Jesus muttering "**No Kidding- I called you to something greater. Ok I guess I'll have to show you again who I am**"

⁶ *He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.*

BOOM

⁷ *Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. ⁸ The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.^[a] ⁹ When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.*

¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." ¹¹ So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.

That must have been a huge number for it to be recorded in the scriptures!

¹² Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" (**I figure he means the fish**)

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶ Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

Jesus is telling Peter and us that our purpose is to Feed His Lambs – Serve those in need, Take Care of my sheep - Love Others and Feed My Sheep - Help others grow in Christ AKA Love, Grow, Serve

And then Jesus uses one of those phrases “Very Truly I tell you, “when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted”. This refers to our BC Years where we did everything we wanted- like fishing! I always pick on Peter but so did Jesus!

The activities where we find comfort and solace can actually steal our joy and rest if we consume them in abundance. They can even form an addiction that does nothing for ourselves or others but destroys relationships with God, our families & friends and others. Jesus modeled in fasting that we need to sacrifice these 100% to God for a time, 21 to 40 days, to remove the authority we’ve given to them and gain sabbath. “But when we are Mature (NOT OLD) we will stretch out our hands” meaning we should be fasting unto the Lord and saying “I put my trust in you Jesus not this other thing!”.

So, what is your signature sin, thorn in the flesh or coping mechanism that blocks you from being close to God? God knows and isn’t judging you for it, He knows the battle in this world is hard. That’s why he came as Jesus to overcome this world. He doesn’t want you to go to other places to receive sabbath & get thru life, He wants to replace your addictions and we are all addicted to something, with His peace, joy, love, security and hope. We must surrender our unhealthy habits to Him, in order to go deeper in our reliance and trust on Him as our sufficiency. When we take this step of faith, Jesus lifts us up and dusts us off and dress us in new clothing (like we see in the parable of the banquet). Then the Holy Spirit living in us leads us toward victory because of our obedience. Our sinful selves will resist (no I don’t want to go). Paul Shares his struggle with this in Romans

Romans 7

¹⁴We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but

what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature.^[c] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So we should take heart that we can, with God's power, achieve victory and move to new levels and heights of spiritual healing. Let's be dealing hope to others for God's kingdom and glory! Amen!

Let's Pray

Joel 2:12-13

Yet even now—oracle of the LORD—
return to me with your whole heart,
with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

13 Rend your hearts, not your garments,
and return to the LORD, your God,
For he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,
and relenting in punishment.^h

God is Good...

Wk 2 - Praying Meditation Healing- Building upon the foundation of Jesus