



Connecting People to **Jesus**

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Friday, March 5, 2021

Pastor Eric Jay

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we confess that we are not worthy of Your love. Our sins are the reason You had to suffer. We come to You only in the confidence of the mercy and forgiveness You promised would be given to those who follow You to Calvary where You bled and died for our salvation. Thank You, Jesus. Help us to empty ourselves as You did so that we might receive all of what You have promised to give to us both today and for eternity. Amen.

Scripture: Isaiah 43:18-19

Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Devotional – “A Way in the Wilderness”

Over these past two initial weeks of Spring, this passage from Isaiah has been running through my head as I walked around our campus at St. Mark and listened to the constant sound of running water and watched the mini tributaries running throughout. God promised to Noah after the flood, “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”(Genesis 8:22) Two weeks ago (and 90 degrees ago!) we were in the frozen “wilderness”. Everything was frozen solid. Cars wouldn’t start. Heaters wouldn’t work. Pipes froze. Snow and ice built back up in no more time than it took to remove them. Though it wasn’t a dry desert, it was still a barren wilderness. Now, as God promised, Spring has sprung forth and the very same ice and snow that once comprised a frozen wasteland now compose the symphony of living water flowing all around, accompanied by the harmonies of the birds returning to the trees and the laughter of students returning to the playground. The Lord has made a way. He always will. He is now, even while we may still be in the wilderness of this sinful world.

I think that is what impacted me the most about my walks around the church grounds lately. The Lord made a way “in” the wilderness, not “around” the wilderness. That’s what Jesus did. He came “in flesh” to make a way “in the wilderness” of sin created by all flesh. He endured the harsh wasteland of being the Light of men in the darkness of men. He revealed the coming of salvation and the Kingdom of God amidst the temptation, doubt, skepticism, anger, ignorance, suffering, and evil schemes through His patient teaching, merciful and mighty acts of love and compassion, and His unwavering faithfulness to God His Father - and because of Jesus, our Father.

The sights and sounds of the changing of the seasons from winter’s wilderness to the sentience of spring also provide us with a living representation of the season of Lent. Throughout the 40 days of Lent we allow ourselves to be once again confronted with the harsh reality of the merciless and unforgiving landscape our sins have created. A life and world devoid of life and

left destitute and hopeless. Our hearts and minds enter a season of spiritual deprivation as we remember that our sins are the reason Jesus had to walk the dusty roads of Jerusalem, carrying the cross of our shame, and surrender Himself to what should have been our fate as He hung crucified on the cross, parched and dry, yet shivering and cold as the loss of His warm and perfect blood poured down to thaw our hard and frozen hearts of sin.

While we “turn our face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes,”(Daniel 9:3) we do so with the hope of the promises of a forgiving and merciful God who promised to “make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert”. We forsake ourselves and repent in dust and ashes, mourning our sin with faith in the promise of Jesus when He said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”(Matthew 5:4) We lay ourselves at the feet of the cross lamenting the pain and suffering we have brought upon the Lord who burdened the punishment for our sins as He was left to despair in loneliness, that barren and frightening wasteland that is the separation from God our sins deserve, as He cried out “My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?”(Mark 15:34) We empty ourselves of ourselves and endure in this wilderness in order that we will once again be filled by the “spring of living water that wells up to eternal life”(John 4:14) and that flows mixed with blood from the pierced heart of our crucified Lord Jesus. (John 19:34)

Jesus said in Matthew 23:12, “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” Longing to receive the fullness of joy and life that Easter morning possesses and promises to give, we lay ourselves lower still in order that our merciful and victorious Lord of life and salvation, who alone is The Way to the Father, would rise us with Himself to the boundless heights of heaven where He has promised, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. Behold, I am making all things new.” (Revelation 21:3-5)

God bless all of you in Your returning to the Lord. Thank you for joining me for another daily devotional, and remember, that God has forgiven yesterday, is with you today, and has already taken care of tomorrow. Amen.