

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Mar 6th 2015

The scripture readings today speak to me about love, service and judgment. In Genesis we hear the story of Joseph the dreamer with his coat of many colors. And those nasty, jealous brothers. The psalmist continues Joseph's story on a happier note and proclaims, remember the marvels the Lord has done. In John 3:16 we hear one of the most beloved of all Bible verses. God so loved the world. And in Matthew, Jesus tells the parable of the tenants. Those nasty, murderous, wretched tenants.

Well, we are two weeks into Lent. A wonderful time where we can spend time with God. Time to reflect on, renew and deepen our relationship with Him. We remember and are reminded of God's love for us. And then we get the story of Joseph and his brothers and the parable of the tenants and the landowner's son. Pretty harsh. Kind of depressing. So, what are we to make of this?

One thing is for certain. Thousands of years may go by, but people still have the same issues. We're still comparing ourselves to others. We still have a skewed sense of justice and fairness. And we still have a sense of entitlement and resentment when we don't get what we think we deserve.

My granddaughter, Annie, is two and a half. She has six uncles who compete constantly to say they are the favorite uncle. Sometimes I worry that Annie may feel a little overwhelmed. I tease the boys about it, but I honestly worry that it is not healthy. As Joseph's brothers can attest, comparing ourselves to others is a losing proposition.

Why do we have a sense of entitlement? How do we get (and maintain) the heart of a servant? How do we get a spirit of gratitude vs resentment? How do we stop comparing ourselves to others?

At my father's funeral, each of my boys told of something their grandfather had said that stuck with them. Zach told of the time his grandfather told him, whenever grandma gives you a task, simply say, thank you for the opportunity.

It is encouraging to know that Joseph and his family, who are the stars in the Bible, made the same mistakes we make and we're still loved by God.

We all have a desire to be loved. We yearn for a closer relationship with God. But it should not be a competition. God does not play favorites. God is more interested in my heart and who I am than what I do. Isn't it funny? John 3:16 makes it very clear. God loves me. So, why do I struggle with that? Why do I think I have to earn it? My prayer today is that we can all take time this Lenten season to spend time with God. To ask questions and simply sit and listen.

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