

Deacon Wendy Rozene
Sermon
2/21/2016

Year C
Second Sunday in Lent
Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 13:31-35
Psalm 27
http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearC_RCL/Lent/CLent2_RCL.html

As we travel *through* the desert this Holy Lent, may we reach out with all our heart, soul, strength and mind to our loving God so that we are able to *go* into the world as one of Christ's own. Amen

Last week we heard of Jesus' temptation in the desert. Today we begin with Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and the cross. The Gospel this week tells of Jesus in the midst of his journey, doing the work that God has called him to do, driving out demons and curing the sick---unafraid of the danger from Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great that sought to kill the infant Jesus---unafraid of the dangers of the Pharisees---confident in the outcome that God has laid out for Him and yet deeply saddened by the response of Jerusalem as heard in Jesus lament "Jerusalem, Oh Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets". The Gospel reading on this second Sunday of Lent is a foreshadowing of things to come for Jesus but it also has a message for us. I see a theme focusing on two words, one Tim mentioned last week the word "*through*" and this week "*Go*". To *Go through* Lent focusing on the *Cross*. Are we willing to *Go* forth from this place and share our faith? Do we have a deep relationship with our Lord to face whatever confronts us in our lives? Do we pray for our enemies? Are we willing to take shelter under God's loving wings rejoicing, strengthening ourselves in good times and allowing God to lift us up in His loving arms during difficult times. We are being called to *Go*, to enter into a relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, to *Go* even when times are rough, to walk

with Jesus, to *Go* and share God's love with all that we meet, friends and enemies alike.

In this passage we see the same word translated three times from the Greek word that means, "to Go". We first see a few Pharisees coming to Jesus and saying, "Go, get out of here, Herod wants to kill you." Are the Pharisees really trying to warn Jesus? Some scholars feel that the Pharisees are trying to drive Jesus underground, others believe that they are trying to pressure him to move out of Galilee to Judea where the Pharisees will have more control over Jesus, but the thoughts of most scholars are that they are trying to convey an honest warning to Jesus.

The Gospel of Luke does not always look at the Pharisees as Jesus opponents. Jesus, you will recall ate at the homes of some of the Pharisees, Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the council, who took responsibility for a proper burial of Jesus was probably a Pharisee. In Acts, there are reports that Pharisees were among the early believers. Whether the Pharisees or Herod were a threat doesn't really pose any danger to Jesus as His call is to *Go*, to continue his ministry, to *Go* to Jerusalem. Are we willing to persist in a venture in the face of adversity like Jesus? Are we willing to persist in our witness in the face of threats? Do we have strength and faith for averting spiritual disaster? Most of us face far lesser threats than Jesus. While most of us will not be beaten or imprisoned because of our faith, we might be criticized because of beliefs or thought of as odd, set apart. Do we openly share our faith with people in our communities or are we a little timid and unsure to do that. Not knowing how others will perceive us. A strong sense of spirituality, a strong relationship with our Lord Jesus *through* prayer, study and

meditation will help guide us *through*. As it suggests in our Lenten meditation book, are you able to let *go* with all your heart, soul, strength and mind so that you can be led *through* the desert.

Psalm 27 says, *the Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?* The psalmist is putting all his trust in the Lord our God. Seeking a relationship with God, seeking a place in God's heavenly kingdom. In times of trouble do we put our trust in the Lord? Through the struggles of this political season, the horrendous name calling, do we seek God in pray to help us discern the strengths of each candidate no matter which side of the political arena that we stand on. Jesus, as he journeyed to Jerusalem was faced with the politics of the time, the politics of the scribes, the Pharisees and Herod. He chose to pray for those who persecuted him, his enemies, those who had different views than he did. We are called to do the same.

I believe we can only do this if we are in relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ *through* God our Savior. When we study, prayerfully enter into a dialogue with God, thanking him for all we have, raising up our concerns for our children, families, this community and the world, giving of ourselves to those who are less fortunate than we are, this is when we enter into that relationship. We take shelter under God's loving wings. I remember many years ago teaching a senior high confirmation class. We were looking at all the names in the bible that Jesus is called: Lamb of God, the good Shepherd, Son of God, the Great I Am... you get the picture it goes on and on. They came across John 10 verse 9 where Jesus says: *I am the door; whoever enters by me will be saved*. One young man said, "Well that seems pretty simple, just walk through." But another added, "First you must turn

the doorknob and it may be locked.” The conversation went on for quite a while as it can with the group of young people, in the end deciding that gaining access to Jesus you first had to turn the doorknob. They talked about the doorknob and the obstacles preventing them from grabbing the doorknob and entering into a relationship with God. It may be locked because of baggage we all carry and are not willing to put down or let *go* of, our hands are too full of the mundane. We may have to search *through* our bag to find the “right key” to unlock the door to put us in the right frame of mind to enter into a relationship and third that we are not all at the same place in time to enter into that relationship. One other obstacle that they felt had to be confronted was the fear of the unknown on the other side of the door. So as this group of young people asked themselves, “What are your obstacles that prevent you from reaching for that doorknob? What prevents you from fully entering into a relationship with God? Is it time, commitments with family, friends, sports or work? Is it finding the right a study group where you can trust the people in the group with your inner most thoughts and concerns? Is it finding a quite prayerful place in this busy world to pray, or a spiritual mentor to guide you on your journey. Is it the fear of the unknown, dangers along the way or the process of discerning where you are being called? Luke’s Gospel assures us, that all things are possible, if we first are willing to take shelter under the all welcoming, nurturing and loving wings of God.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus in you I place all my trust and hope. May I wholly desire you and your will above all else and long for your heavenly city as my true home and refuge. Fill my heart with love and mercy for others that I may boldly witness to the truth

and joy of the gospel through word and example, both to those who accept your truth and those who oppose it. Amen