

Rev. Robert E. Laite Jr.
Second Sunday of Lent
March 17, 2017

“I pray that I may really try to do God’s will in all my affairs. I pray that I may do all I can to help others find God’s will for them.” **AMEN** **Twenty-four Hours a Day**

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” **BCP**

We have entered the Second Sunday in Lent “by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word.” I don’t know if this was done by design or not, but our recent studies on our “Rule of Life” in EFM seems to have come at the perfect time. It has caused me to reflect on my own “rule of life”. I have made a couple of changes as a result. One of those was picking up the practice of using the Anglican Prayer Beads again. It is a wonderful way for me to focus during a prayer time. I sometimes have the attention span of a three year old. I felt very comforted, focused, and at peace while going through the prayers. At the conclusion I felt a wonderful sense of calm that I have not felt in many years. I believe this has been part of God’s plan to put me in the “right place at the right time”.

In today’s Gospel from Luke, the Pharisees are warning Jesus to flee, to “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” Now why would they do this? What is their motivation? Have you ever been in the position of someone warning you not to do something and wonder what the motivation is? There has been some debate among theologians as to what the Pharisees were up to. Some say that they were trying to scare Jesus off because they don’t like what he is teaching. Others say that they were giving Jesus a true warning because they feared for his safety. Herod had demonstrated his evil intent by having John the Baptist killed.

In a commentary from Sermon writer on Luke’s Gospel has this to say;

“Our understanding of this passage does not depend on whether it is Herod, the Pharisees, or both who pose a danger to Jesus. Presumably Jesus knows the danger, but is undeterred. He will neither flee from Herod nor allow the Pharisees to dissuade him. He has work to do—“today and tomorrow, and the third day I complete my mission”. He is following the Father’s agenda, and will not allow fear of Herod or the Pharisees to deter him.”

Jesus knows what is in store for him, but he still forges on despite the knowledge of his impending death. He is driven, committed to fulfill His destiny, His “mission”. The commentary further states; “perhaps the devil sees the power of worship and pilgrimage and has concentrated his forces to defeat him. Even today, the tempter often concentrates at the point of our greatest strength. Great temptation is often a sign that we have come close enough to God that Satan has chosen to target us. In such moments, Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem is instructive, It tells us that God’s love is undiminished. It tells us that God is rooting for us. It tells us that God’s help is available to us. It tells us that we have only to avail ourselves to God’s help to escape tragedy. It also tells us that God gives us freedom to choose between good and evil, and with the freedom comes accountability. Jerusalem will die for killing prophets—including the prophet Jesus.”

“We will do well to remember that Satan is always watching—hoping to catch us far from base so that he can tag us before we can reach safety. Are we willing to persist in the face of adversity? Jesus faced danger from Herod and religious leaders, but did not allow that to stop him. Christians in China, India, Vietnam, and a host of Islamic nations face persecution today, and we admire their persistent faith.

Most of us face lesser, more subtle dangers. While nobody is likely to beat or imprison us because of our faith, they are likely to criticize our witness—or threaten our standing in our profession or community—or label us as intolerant (the greatest of sins in a Politically Correct world). Are we willing to persist in our witness in the face of such threats?”

My response to this is, “I will with God’s help.” I have no greater joy than to have a Faith that will carry me through times of trial. I know that I am in a community of “like minded” Christians that I can wade through the turbulent waters with. I know that I am not alone.

My current Journey in EFM has been like a Devine gift from God. This has given me a wonderful foundation for starting the Lenten season. I came into the church late in the afternoon on Ash Wednesday. I was struck by the majestic color of purple that adorned the lecterns and communion set-up. Our color purple is a representation of majesty and mourning. I’m looking forward to the coming weeks of meditation, reflection and healing. I trust and have faith in God that all will be well.

From the Healing Runes, Faith is said to be a source of restoration. “It calls for the rebuilding of belief in yourself, in your life and, if you have fallen away, in your relationship with the Devine.

It has been said that faith is not belief without proof, but rather trust without reservation, and that trust, when cared for and respected, encourages the self to blossom. Trust is divine medicine.

For some, this asks you to show trust in a present situation. For others, it calls for embracing the changes you are facing with trust and wisdom.

If this applies to your relationship with yourself, know that love grows when trust is present. And in relationships of the heart, remember that *I love you* and *I trust you* are two stones for crossing the same stream.

On the other hand, if trust is lacking in your life, consider what you can do to restore it, or to create it where it never was. For trust is the foundation upon which we build our lives and do God’s work in the world. However oppressive or painful the moment may seem, this urges you to have faith and to know that, as you heal, you *will* be able to trust again.

Look at it this way: Each time you face the issue of trust, you are being asked to grow. When you push through your fears and trust your feelings, you do grow—and trust grows in you.

You are encouraged to take the first step, to reclaim the lost trust you once cherished and thrived upon. We are born to live our lives in trust. Let no one tell you differently.

Know thyself was the counsel of the Oracle of Delphi in ancient Greece. Now, at the close of the twentieth century, to those wise words let us add; ***Trust and heal thyself.***

Persevere in your journey, and trust in your healing process, for both are uniquely yours and as individual as fingerprints and snowflakes.

Remember the wise teacher, the one that speaks from within us.

The breath of heaven is everywhere trust is.”

AMEN

