

Intro/Invitation
Like a Rock

“Like a rock,” croons the classic pop musician Bob Seger, “I was strong as I could be. Nothing ever got to me. I was something to see. Like a rock, I was standing arrow straight, chargin’ from the gate, carryin’ the weight. Sun upon my skin, hard against the wind, I see myself again, like a rock.”

Are you humming along yet?

Seger, famous for the passion in his performances, emotionally belts out the attributes and feelings of what it is to be young, strong and free from responsibility. But then the song takes a turn. Seger’s boastfully bold vocals become soft, sad, reflective.

“Twenty years now--where’d they go?” Seger melodiously queries, “Twenty years--I don’t know. I sit and I wonder sometimes, where they’ve gone.”

Time is catching up with Mr. Seger’s rock. Artfully, through his God given voice, with his penchant for rhythm and rhyme, the artist laments the fading of his youth. We all can (or will) relate to this human certainty.

For those who follow Christ, however, there is tremendous hope as we face the physical and emotional challenges that come with life. While Seger is wondering what happened to his youthful characteristics, the apostle Paul exhorts believers to, “... not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16). Where are you in this human struggle? Are you with Bob or Paul? Are you melancholy about loss and limitations or are you in the process of daily renewal?

The “Day of Ashes” or Ash Wednesday is set aside for the purpose of remembering our carnality and God as our Creator and Sustainer (see Gen. 2:7). This “holy day” kicks off the season of Lent--a time for *metanoia* (turning back to God)--a time for us, as disciples of Christ, to be more attentive to God.

Why would we do that? We wouldn’t unless we knew what the Biblical musician David knew (and what Seger’s song misses). “The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer,” David professed from among the rocks as he hid from the murderous King Saul (2 Sam 22:2). With his life on the line, David realized that his ultimate, true salvation was in God and not his own virtue or power.

Our worship services during Lent (March 1 through Easter) will take us to “The Rock.” We will be considering the sacrifices that Jesus’ made for us. We will reflect on the ways we can more fully commit to our part of the relationship with God our Rock (foundation, stability, strength, protection) since Jesus gave so much for us. We may have to “give up” a few things in order to make space for activities like prayer, Scripture, service and other spiritual practices. These disciplines are our sacred means to renewal.

Or we can sing sad songs along with Bob.