

The First Sunday in Lent – Sunday 26 February 2023

• Genesis 2.15-17; 3. 1-7; Psalm 32; Romans 5.12-21; Matthew 4.1-11

The fall of humanity into the sin of disobedience was engineered by Satan through the temptation to acquire the forbidden power of knowledge and wisdom. The psalmist tells us that the burden of sin is relieved by prayer and trust in God, accepting instruction and counselling obediently, but humanity is still doomed to live as sinners. The gift of grace is offered by the one man who was able to resist the temptation to power and whose obedience to God's will ensured that death no longer had dominion.

- Pray for the humility to live in obedience to God's will, and to accept with gratitude the gift of grace offered by our Saviour.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Melanesia.

Text: S Z Hadgraft St John's Cathedral, Brisbane © Anglican Board of Mission, 2023

Reflections

As we step into Lent, it is good to reflect on the wilderness experiences we have had or are currently experiencing, this past year. Conflicting advice, busy schedules, anxieties over life matters of which we have no control, injustices that we see but to which we feel helpless in our limited ability to respond, other people's 'urgency' and demands, a decision to walk away from a commitment though it is the healthy thing to do, temptations to take the 'simple' path or to 'feast' on the delectable now, while leaving the longer term essentials aside – all these overload our mental, emotional, and mostly, our spiritual life, and draw us to the edge of 'wilderness', where our physical wellbeing suffers.

Lent offers an opportunity to look at our personal life – heart & soul, mind & body - to honestly review how we are living, why we are doing what we are doing, how we are managing, or honestly, how we are not managing; what are our pathways for spiritual richness, wellbeing, emotional, spiritual and physical healing; our choice of when we are going to step into the 'green pastures' and sit beside 'still waters' with God.

No one can do this, but you. You may seek advice, walk with a Supervisor, read or listen to teachings. Yet, in the end, it is your confessing and self-awareness, your shriving and acceptance of forgiveness, your response-ability, your choice as to how you will follow God's Way, feast on what is good, shake the dust off of what does not offer peace, and step into an Easter of restoration and renewal.

May you allow God's angels to hold you up with their hands,
so that not even your feet will be hurt on the stones.

Rev'd Anne Hewitt, SA Council of Churches



HOLY INNOCENTS

ANGLICAN CHURCH BELAIR

Readings - Sunday 26th February – First Sunday in Lent

Sentence

We do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. *Matthew 4.4*

Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet did not sin:
give us grace to direct our lives in obedience to your will,
that, as you know our weakness,
so we may know your power to save;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

First Reading: Genesis 2.15-17; 3.1-7

2 ¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.' **3** ¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' ² The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³ but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die."' ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

For the word of the Lord, ***Thanks be to God.***

Psalm 32

- ¹ Blessed are those whose sin is forgiven:
whose iniquity is put away.
- ² Blessed are those to whom the Lord imputes no blame:
and in whose spirit there is no guile.
- ³ For whilst I held my tongue:
my bones wasted away with my daily complaining.
- ⁴ Your hand was heavy upon me day and night:
and my moisture was dried up like a drought in summer.
- ⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you:
and my iniquity I did not hide;
- ⁶ I said 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord':
and so you forgave the wickedness of my sin.
- ⁷ For this cause shall everyone that is faithful
make their prayer to you in the day of trouble:
**and in the time of the great water-flood,
it shall not come near them.**
- ⁸ You are a place to hide me in,
you will preserve me from trouble:
you will surround me with deliverance on every side.
- ⁹ 'I will instruct you, and direct you in the way that you should go:
I will fasten my eye upon you, and give you counsel.
- ¹⁰ 'Be not like horse or mule, that have no understanding:
whose forward course must be curbed with bit and bridle.'
- ¹¹ Great tribulations remain for the ungodly:
**but whoever puts their trust in the Lord,
mercy embraces them on every side.**
- ¹² Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, and be glad:
and shout for joy, all you that are true of heart.

Second Reading: Romans 5.12-21

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned— ¹³ sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings

justification. ¹⁷ If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For the word of the Lord, *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel Reading: Matthew 4.1-11

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' ⁴ But he answered, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."' ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."' ⁷ Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."' ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; ⁹ and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! for it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."' ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

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