

Fr. Jeff's Weekly Homily

4th Sunday of Lent

March 2, 2008

READING 1: 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7

Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart.”

Psalm 23: There is nothing I shall want.

READING 2: Ephesians 5: 8-14

Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41

Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not also blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, ‘We see,’ so your sin remains.

We hear in our first reading that David was anointed to be King of the Jews before he ever met Goliath. David was a brilliant strategist. He went from being a poor shepherd boy in the country to be the greatest of Israel's kings. He went from being a boy with a slingshot to being a great general leading troops to improbable victories in battle after battle. He went from living in the fields with the sheep to living in the grandest palace in a capitol of his own making. He went from being the youngest son with little to say to being the one to decide who would pay taxes, whose sons would go to war, how the courts would rule. He had it all; he was on top; he made history. He did it all and even convinced the people that it was all according to God's plan. Who do you think wrote this story about David being anointed? You can bet King Saul's scribes didn't record this history; it was King David's scribe Samuel. Anyone who would want to overthrow this king would be going against God's will. Just to seal the deal, he prepared to build God the Temple. But God said, “I know your motivation, David, I know all your strategies, all your schemes, skip the Temple, I don't need it. I'll give you what you want; I'll make your family the glory of Israel.”

A university professor gave his students a chance to evaluate his course. One of the students said: “I like the course, but I feel strongly that the professor puts too much responsibility for learning on the students.”

Before we were washed in the waters of Baptism, we might be expected to be

ignorant, to be spiritually blind, like the man born blind. But since we have been washed in the waters of baptism we have the miracle of spiritual sight, or faith in Jesus. But it is our responsibility to learn. The more we learn about Jesus, the more exciting and the more glorious he becomes.

He came to bring Good News! What Good News? Jesus said, “Wake up! Wake up! You are sleep-walking! God knows you to your core and loves you!” God is in love with *sinner*s. It’s a scandal, I know, that’s why the religious leaders couldn’t understand Jesus. Our creator God is in love with sinners! At the Easter vigil Fr. Kaz will chant the proclamation: “Oh happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer!” And in that favorite of sports fans, John 3:16, “God so loved the world that while we were still in sin, he sent his only son not to condemn the world but to save it.” We are sleep walking through the information age. We know more than we need about Brittany and Brad and about Roger and Jose and their wives. In these closing weeks of Lent, how about determining to learn more about this magnificent man who calls us friends because he has shared with us all he knows about the Father. Why not use the remaining days of Lent to get to know Jesus better. Read the Gospel of John. Every year with every new experience in our lives we get more out of the stories of the woman at the well and the blind man and Lazarus and Jesus washing his disciples’ feet. He came to give us life in abundance. He came to drive away fear, all fear, and set us free. Our best strategy is to learn more about him.

Like David, Jesus has a strategy. There’s a story that when he ascended into heaven there was a great celebration. All the angels and people of history were there. The archangel Gabriel approached Jesus and said, “So how do you plan to spread the Good News now that you are home?” Jesus said, “I left my friends all they needed to know.” “But,” said Gabriel, “They are just a small group of powerless country people; do you have a back up plan?” “No,” Jesus said, “I am depending on my friends.” God fulfilled his promise to David; but not the way David imagined. The glory of the house of David only spent one night in a palace and he was in the dungeon. The only throne he had was the bloody cross. But his love continues to conquer and it is our responsibility to learn the Good News!

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