

March 4-10, 2018

By Ray Berg

Eden Lutheran Church, Munising, MI

Sunday, March 4, 2018

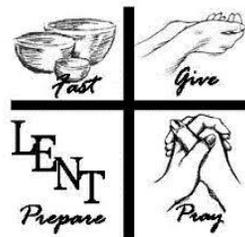
Live as Christ Would Have Us Live.

Text: 1 Peter 3:15

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

Where we live our lives as an example of how we think Christ would want us to live, then others see that, and hear and listen to what comes out of our mouths. When we are always kind in our actions, always use kind words and endeavors, and speak often of Christ’s love and sacrifice to and for us, others will take notice. Sometimes they will ask about how they might have what we have. Always be prepared. We never know when someone is on the brink. It may possibly be the most difficult question they ever asked. Be gentle with God’s love.

Let us Pray: *Dear Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Please help me to be ready with showing others how your love fills our hearts and fulfills our lives. As our hearts become so absorbed, it leaves no room for sadness and ill will. Thank you for loving us so much!! In Jesus name we pray. Amen*



Monday, March 5, 2018

Planting on Good Soil; Let Us Be the Good Soil

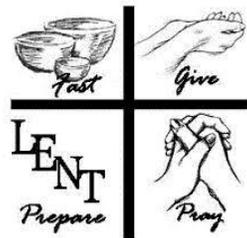
Text: Mark 4:3

“Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed.”

Almost the whole chapter of Mark is used to teach about Parables.

It goes on to tell about seed being planted on the path so that birds ate the seeds. Some fell on rocky places without much soil, and they withered because there were no roots. Some went among thorns and were choked off. Also, some fell on good soil and grew and multiplied, many times. We usually make these references to our human receptors as we hear God's word and Jesus story, some of us gladly hear and respond immediately. Later we allow other things and influences to overtake, forgetting about Jesus' love story, allowing our old lifestyle to return and absorb our lives. Sometimes the seed or word falls on good soil and it produces a "good crop," many times over what was sown.

Let us Pray: *Father, today we pray that we are offered and respond to planting that "good seed" into a "good soil". Help us to be that good soil and to always look for the opportunity of planting the seed of your fantastic love. Make us that farmer who plants on good soil. Many times! We pray in Your Son's Holy Name. Amen*



Tuesday, March 6, 2018

The Promise and the Blessing

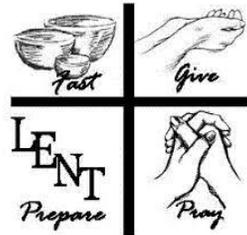
Text: Genesis 32:26

"Then the Man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak," but Jacob replied, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me."

How is it that the patriarch Jacob knew he had the right to DEMAND a blessing in the night struggle by the river? Jacob was a praying man with great devotion and concentration. Although there is no reason to assume that he qualified for the blessing. Presumptuous? Think about it. He didn't consider himself guiltless before God. However, we can, should, and do claim promises made by God to us. In Bethel on his way to a foreign country, he had received from God the blessing, "I will not leave until I have done what I have promised to you" (Genesis 28:15). God's promises are stronger than anything and sin doesn't void or nullify a

promise. Jacob clung to that. Hang on to God's promises and you too will be blessed.

Let us Pray: *Father, let us always remember that it is because you have loved us and wanted the best for us that you have promised us abundant blessings. Let us seek out and claim these promises/blessings. Thank You for blessings received and those yet to redeem. In Jesus Name. Amen*



Wednesday, March 7, 2018

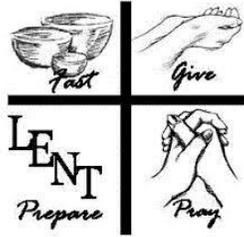
Waiting In Silence ...

Text: Psalm 62:1 (ASV) *My soul waits in silence for God only...*

Psalm 62:1 (NIV) *Truly my soul finds rest in God: My salvation comes from Him:*

Different translations. Today to emphasize the silence, we use the former. Our Bible study drifted off course several times to subjects of every manner: restaurants, reputations, kids, different beliefs. What to do? As long as “the talk” is providing another angle to what we are studying, and is of a loving nature, then continue. Sometimes folks are on a time constraint and need to stay on schedule. We need to be respectful of their time and we need to find a loving way to center conversation back around the subject we gathered to discuss. If what we want to say isn't contributing, then silence is better. Other conversations could then be held following the session.

Let us Pray: *Father, we know we are loved by You and are encouraged to develop an “attitude of gratitude.” Help us to know when to add to a conversation and when NOT to. Let kindness be a guide, and may we be an example in all our ways, always with kindness in what we do and say. In Your Son's Holy Name. Amen*



Thursday, March 8, 2018

The Lord Provides Friends

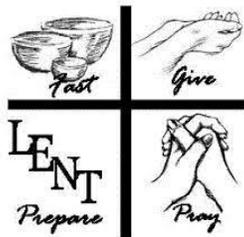
Text: Ephesians 2:19

You are fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.

This is so wholly true and relevant. In the city where I grew up there were two huge denominations: mine and another one. They argued from the pulpit: publicly. Therefore, many years later when a Christian Woman's Group came to my re-located town, I was utterly taken aback when there was a whole new ecumenical membership. How wonderful - here there were women of all faiths and background. It was great. Friends from everywhere. They were all Christians. The basic faith path was so alike even with different ways to get there. No need to shun those who choose a different route when we can all meet at Jesus' feet together. He loves us equally. He died for "those folks" as well. Let us gather together. Let us be friends. We all need friends and God has provided.

Let us Pray: *Father, thank you for providing those people to us to share our lives more abundantly. Love shared is love increased, In Jesus Name. Amen*

From an old hymn: *If Jesus you love truly: friends you will have surely.*



Friday, March 9, 2018

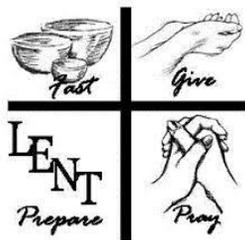
Healing for the Nations

Text: Matthew 5:9

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

During the summer of election campaigns, I cancelled cable TV. It is NOT missed. The ever-loving phone and newspapers provide what news is important. Rather than leaving the responsibility of peace up to the nations, country leaders and others, wouldn't we have more peace if we begin "at home"? Each one of us. If we develop an atmosphere in which injustice, dissension and conflict will not thrive. They say the renewal of nations begins with the individuals and families. There are those who have no peace themselves and they deprive others of peace. Then there are those who have peace and spread it around to others. These are the peacemakers. The ones called blessed. Jesus said, "*Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God.*" The powers of Heaven are working within them. God's own grace has developed them into people who ask for forgiveness, who acknowledge faults and failures, who reconnect with enemies. These are the people the world needs.

Let us Pray: Father God, we fall short of being completely humble and peaceful. Please be with us on this journey and make us into peacemakers for Christ. In Jesus Name. Amen



Saturday, March 10, 2018

Christlike Charity

Text: Matthew 25:45

"Whatever you did NOT do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me."

We seem to be inclined to sow charity and "to do" for those folks who are gracious and who respond to our "good works" favorably. Feedback is nice. However, in this case, Jesus is saying to us to "do for" the least of these folks. Perhaps they do not know how to appreciate our kind service or attention or perhaps they are often rude or even take advantage of our good will. These are "the least" of His loved ones, who may not have within themselves that which is necessary to recognize the value of all or part of what they have received and not in any way show appreciation for our gifts toward them. Some have never been taught basic gratitude. The Lord doesn't ask us to do for or serve the whole world - He said for one. He gave himself totally to each and every individual who came to Him. He expects us to also notice individuals and to help them in their individual needs.

Let us Pray: *Our Father, sometimes we take the easy road or the more comfortable way. A place that rewards us with many "Thank You" or other feel-good responses. Help us to look for that less traveled way and help or do for "the least of" our flock. We ask this in your Holy Name. Amen.*

