

Lent 2
“The Bare Necessities of Life” (Mark 8:31-43)
February 25, 2024
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 2nd Sunday in Lent is from our Gospel reading, Mark 8:31-34.

“31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 33 But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

So far the text...

There’s a “must” in these words that Jesus spoke. Did you hear it? **the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.**

Jesus needed to teach His disciples about this paramount “must”, because, judging from Peter’s reaction, it wasn’t very prominent in their thinking. It wasn’t on their radar. They were being mindful of the things of men.

And yes, it is important to be mindful in the things of men, in the daily necessities of life, to make sure that something urgent isn’t overlooked... God knows our daily necessities even before we know them and takes care of them, even without our prayer, even to the ungodly and evil men.

And yet, there is a supreme necessity of which Jesus speaks of to His disciples that is getting closer and closer to fulfillment – His suffering, death and resurrection. And no one, not Peter or the devil can stand in the way of Jesus fulfilling this mission. It’s a must. There’s no option B or C. Jesus graciously fills them in on

God's plan for the redemption of the world. Because their thinking is on this level...the things of men...and it needs to be on this level...the things of God!

When I was growing up, one of the popular Disney films that came out in 1967 was "Jungle Book". You may remember there was the lovable, happy go lucky bear named Baloo...and the boy Mowgli...and of course, there was Kaa the snake who wanted to harm the boy. Baloo took little Mowgli under his protection and tutelage as they wandered through the jungle and taught him the "Bare Necessities of Life".

"They'll come to you" Baloo kept on repeating. "Look for the bare necessities, the simple bare necessities Forget about your worries and your strife. I mean the bare necessities, old mother nature's recipes. That bring the bare necessities of life."

Baloo admitted that there are necessities of life that can bring you worries and strife. Our Gospel reading from Mark 8 began the chapter with a feeding of 4000, not in a jungle, but in the wilderness. And the disciples posed Jesus this question:

"4 Then His disciples answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven."

How? Impossible for man, but not for the Son of God...who fed all the people and had 7 baskets of leftovers. Jesus did this, just as He had fed the 5000 and had 12 baskets of leftovers. Yes, the necessities of life will come to you...yes, they come, not by mother nature's hand but by the hand of God.

We should most definitely forget about our worries and strife when we have are working on the family budget. As we all do, we group things into "needs" and "wants", right? What are the needs that have to get paid...food, water, shelter, electricity, clothes, transportation? And then when these necessities are met, what's left? Has that amount been shrinking with higher inflation and rising costs? Yes, but God's gracious power doesn't ever shrink to meet our needs.

Matthew 6:26

Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

That’s the Son of God speaking...not Baloo.

But, let’s think more about the things of God...seek first the things of God, of His kingdom of His righteousness. Back to chapter 8 of our Gospel reading of St. Mark as the disciples were crossing the lake after the feeding of the 4000...

“14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. 15 Then He charged them, saying, “Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “It is because we have no bread.”

The things of God... spiritual things... the spiritual battle against the false teaching of works righteousness of the Pharisees. Beware! This is of the utmost importance for your soul. Yes, I’ll take care of your bodies just like I fed the 5000 and the 4000 and there was plenty extra. How much extra Jesus asks them? 12 and 7 baskets.

So let’s talk about the most important thing that you need. The Greatest Necessity of Life. I’m going to lay it bare for you right now.

“the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke this word openly.”

On this list of needs and wants...this takes priority over everything else. And thanks be to God...”it comes to you.” God graciously came to you because our greatest need was His righteousness.

As Jesus began His public ministry at His baptism, we saw that “must” of what Jesus came to do. We began the Lenten season hearing again of the battle between the old evil foe and Jesus in the desert. The Holy Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness not to have a 40-day survival test in the desert, see how good He was at making fire and shelter, but to be tempted by the devil for 40 days for the survival

of all mankind. That was what was on the line. Jesus' suffering was a "must" for the world's salvation. Jesus had to be tested as the perfect, righteous sacrifice for all people.

So we heard last week these words from Hebrews 2.

Hebrews 2:17-18

17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."

Jesus had to be like us...flesh and blood. That was a must. For as a true Man, He had to offer the perfect, sinless sacrifice, the propitiation for the sins of the people...all people.

Our epistle reading for today from Romans 5 explains to us how dire our necessity was. God lays bare our greatest necessity – our ungodliness that we haven't kept God's commandments like we must.

"6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Without strength...totally incapable of meeting this necessity of righteousness that is required to enter heaven...totally ungodly. "How this great need be satisfied?" We don't have enough righteousness, not physical bread to feed our souls.

Our greatest impossible need was met for us by the love of God. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. While we were actually opposing Him, denying Him like Peter, running away from Him, hiding from Him, not believing Him, not believing the things of God!...Christ died for us!

Listen to the most comforting words of the rest of today's epistle reading.

"9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were

reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

This is the Gospel...justified by His blood. Jesus met the necessity. We are reconciled. We are saved. We have peace. So began our epistle reading which are the words on your bulletin cover.

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

We stand.. at peace...with God...how? Through our Lord Jesus Christ! And with this peace we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We rejoice that God has prepared for us mansions in heaven as we hear from John 14.

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

Forget about your worries and your strife! Jesus went to the cross at the hands of the elders chief priests and scribes to prepare your heavenly mansion. And if this is so, and it is, because Jesus accomplished our greatest necessity, then as we even go through the tribulations of this life, we can not only have peace, but glory in them.

“And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

So think on these things, the things of God and His gracious coming to you in Word and Sacrament to meet your spiritual necessities, forgetting your worries and your strife and glorying in the hope that God has given you through faith in Jesus. Amen.

“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)