

March 5, 2006

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent

“A Quest for Life - A Quest for God”

(Salvation) John 10:10

[Click here for notes that were in the bulletin.](#)

During Lent we reflect on Jesus; His life, death and resurrection. The other morning while doing my morning walk, I was reflecting on the question, **Why did Jesus come?** And a Scripture came to mind; A Scripture in which Jesus Himself answers that question. It is John 10:10 (NCV): “A thief comes to steal and kill and destroy, but I came to give life — life in all its fullness.”

(THE MESSAGE)

“A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.”

This is the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent. Lent is a 40 day period leading up to the Resurrection event celebrated on Easter Sunday. Lent is a time for spiritual renewal; A time to think about our life, especially our spiritual pilgrimage. And so, between now and Easter we are going on a quest for God. A quest for life is a quest for God. (participation in the prayer & fasting will help...see insert. This week: Media. May be a good idea to monitor your children's TV watching as well...In a recent report by the Parents Television Council: “...children's programming analyzed by the PTC (found) there were ... an average of 7.86 violent incidents per hour...To put this figure in perspective, consider that in 2002 the six broadcast networks combined averaged only 4.71 instances of violence per hour of prime time programming. Thus there is more violence aimed directly at young children than at adults on television today.” [Wolf in Sheep's Clothing: A Content Analysis of Children's Television by Kristen Fyfe, Senior Writer/Editor, PTC. March 2006]) Pray and fasting is a good tool to help us in our quest for God.

A quest for life cannot begin with yourself, because you did not create yourself. God created you and so a quest for life begins with God. You exist because God wanted you to exist, He willed for you to exist. You were made by God and for God, and until you understand that, life will never make sense.

People from every walk of life, in every generation, every culture and nationality are on a quest for life and the meaning of life and there purpose in life. The Bible says that **life, real life is found in Jesus Christ. Through Christ God gives us physical life and through Jesus Christ He gives us spiritual life.** John wrote (John 1:1-4 NLT), “In the beginning the Word (Christ) already existed. He was with God, and he was God. He was in the beginning with God. He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn't make. Life itself was in him, and this life gives light to everyone.”

God give us life through Christ. **Through Christ God gives us a better life,** better than we ever dreamed of. This does not mean a life without trouble or pain, but it means we have His *strength to get through the difficulties of life.* This life that God gives us, this

strength for the difficulties of life is God Himself. Through Christ God gives us *His* life by way of His Holy Spirit. God's life in us will produce this kind of *fruit*: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23 NLT). That defines a better life than when we did not know Jesus. ***Through Christ God gives us Eternal Life***, knowing God now and after death... in heaven. Jesus said (John 14:6-7 NLT), "...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

We search for meaning within ourselves, we look for life in our position or status in life. We look for fulfillment from our job, our family, or from money. We look to different people and the philosophies they teach. When Jesus says, "A thief comes to steal and kill and destroy, but I came to give life — life in all its fullness" it means anything that is against Him and His teachings will ultimately steal, kill and destroy life. But He came to give life, real and eternal life. Augustine wrote, "*Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee, O God.*" The quest for life is a quest for God and our quest for God begins with Jesus Christ. [clip]

A quest for life is a quest for God and Jesus was willing to pay the supreme price to cover our sin, that we might know a holy God and thus find life. To proceed with this quest for life, real life with purpose and meaning, it is absolutely necessary to become a follower of Jesus Christ. Only a personal relationship with Him will give you the life you seek. But it must be a personal relationship. Do you know that some people miss Eternal Life by 18 inches? Imagine the tragedy of that. You see, the distance from your head to your heart is approximately 18 inches. Many have Jesus in their head but not in their heart. Many know about Jesus, many are involved in religious activities, programs and service projects, but do not know Jesus.

A quest for real life is a quest for God. You will find God if you seek God. He is not far from each one of us (Acts 17:27). He is not hiding Himself from us, He wants us to know Him. But **our quest requires and begins with a close, personal relationship with Jesus Christ** and ***that requires us to repent, believe and receive Jesus.***

It begins with repentance. Here's what I mean by **repentance**:

*Admit to yourself and God that you have done wrong things* as far as God is concerned and confess these sins to God.

*Be sorry*, not that you got caught, but rather, be sorry because *you have broken God's heart.*

*Do an "about face."* That is, turn your back on your sinful ways and quit them.

That's how you repent. Now **Believe**. By that I mean:

Trust that the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross was for your sin – to pay the penalty for your sin, to take the punishment you deserved so that you could be pardoned.

*Trust Jesus to forgive you.* Throw away your confidence in trying to please God and do good things in order to be right with God. Simply trust that Christ sacrifice on the cross was for you, to forgive your sin.

*Commit yourself to Jesus,* the Jesus portrayed in the New Testament. Embrace Him as God's plan for your life and the only hope of your salvation.

Believe that when you trust in Christ as your personal Savior, and your sins are pardoned, it is just as if you never sinned. Your sins are forgiven, you are free, free from sin and free to obey God as you ought.

Now that you believe, you can **receive** Jesus. By that I mean:

*Pray and ask Jesus to forgive you, come into your life and be your Savior.* If you do that then you now have new life, a spiritual quickening or awakening. You are a new person. You are restored to a relationship with God, you are adopted into and are now a part of the family of God.

Realize that this is all a gift from God and gratefully accept it as a gift.

This is not the end of the quest, this is just the beginning, then the quest continues.

If you have already made a decision to be a follower of Jesus...great! If not, bow your head, confess your need and ask Jesus into your heart. Once you join the family of God, you will be ready to move on in this quest for life. Jesus came that you "can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of."