

(For Monday, February 27, 2017) **Did you know that God chose to save you at the beginning of time?**

“He [Jesus] was in the beginning with God.”(Jn.1:3-ESV)

Of the four, John’s Gospel was written latest. Perhaps because he had more time to think about things than Matthew, Mark, and Luke John’s work is the most reflective of the four. At the opening of his account, we read about Jesus being “The Word” (In Greek “*logos*”) through which all things were made. In a certain way, if God the Father is the divine author of creation and salvation, and if God the Holy Spirit is the divine inspiration for creation and salvation, then God the Son is the divine agency of creation and salvation. Thus, when God spoke his world into existence in Genesis, it was through God’s Word that all things came into being. And, since God’s knowledge is infinite and unbound by time, he already knew that one day he would send his Son, The Word, to die a horrific death so that you and I might be saved.

So you see, even before time began, God had made a plan to bring you home to him. Now **THAT’S** love!

(For Tuesday, February 28, 2017) **Does God have your total devotion?**

“You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you— ¹⁵for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God.” (Deut.6:14-15a-ESV)

When God says he’s a “jealous” God, it’s different from the envy you and I sometimes feel. The Hebrew word “*qana*” is used frequently to describe God’s character. It indicates strong conviction or zeal - so zealousness. When the 10 Commandments are renewed, God tells the Children of Israel that even his name is “Jealous,” (See Ex.34:14) But that’s really the only way God could possibly be. Since he loves us enough to send his Son to be sacrificed in our place, how could he want anything less than our complete devotion? And God’s “jealousy” for our total allegiance actually works to our advantage. The only way to get close enough to God in order to receive the fullness of his grace is to love him with all our might (See Deut.6:6)..So, of course he’s jealous of (or zealous for) our full attention. Because he loves us more than we could ever comprehend.

Are **you** giving God your complete allegiance and devotion? He deserves it!

(For Ash Wednesday -March 1, 2017) **Are you willing to get up and go if God calls?**

“So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the Word of the Lord.” (Jonah 3:3-ESV)

Jonah finally understands that no matter how far he runs, he can’t escape God’s will. So, he got up and went to Nineveh as God’s witness to repent. Nineveh was a great culture, and who knew what their reaction might be to this pesky Israelite Prophet? Surely their mighty king would not take kindly to Jonah’s stinging rebuke. Yep. This dangerous mission made now sense to Jonah. But he got up and went anyway. Gideon’s army of 300 going up against the mighty Midianites made no earthly sense. But Gideon got up and went, and was wondrously victorious. (See Judges 7). The Deacon Philip was really just kitchen-help in the new Christian community’s rest-home for widows. But God told him to leave everything and go into the desert. Philip didn’t know why. But he Got up and went down toward Gaza, and because of his faithfulness a powerful official from a mighty empire was converted to The Faith. (See Acts 8:26-39)

Even if you don’t understand why, if God is calling you to a particular witness, maybe you should still just get up and go!

(For Thursday, March 2, 2017) **On what is your knowledge of the truth founded?**

“One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said “Cretans are always liars....” (Titus 1:12a-ESV)

Paul may be speculating about a widely held philosophical concept known as the “Epimenides Paradox.” Attributed to that 7th Century BC Greek philosopher, the paradox went, “Epimenides the Cretan says, ‘all the Cretans are liars,’ but Epimenides is himself a Cretan; therefore he is himself a liar. But if he be a liar, what he says is untrue, and consequently the Cretans are truthful.”¹ Paul may be cautioning us to avoid placing our faith in the words of any man, but rather in the Word of God itself. Even the most Godly person is broken. Even the most learned Biblical scholar has an imperfect understanding of the immense depths of Scripture. When we discover that those we most admire have feet of clay, it’s all too easy to attribute to them the label of “liar,” or “scoundrel.” A more grace-filled approach to seeking the truth is to “read, learn, mark, and inwardly digest”² God’s Word for ourselves. For they are truly “trustworthy” (See Titus 1:9) and really do contain “everything necessary for salvation.”³

¹This is the way the Oxford Academic Thomas Fowler stated the Paradox in 1869 (See Fowler, Thomas (1869). *The Elements of Deductive Logic (3rd ed.)*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 163. Retrieved 1 April 2011).

²See Proper 28 of “Collects, Traditional,” Book of Common Prayer (1979) p. 184.

³See Article VI of the Articles of Religion, Book of Common Prayer (1979) p. 868.

(For Friday, March 3, 2017) **How do others perceive your witness?**

“The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah.” (Jn.1:41-NIV)

I think of Andrew as “the disciple of quiet faith.” I could find only two instances where Andrew is actually quoted in the Bible. So, he talked little. But when he did speak, evidently people placed great confidence in what he said. It’s enough for him to tell his brother Peter “We have found the Messiah,” for Peter to believe this astonishing news. If Andrew said it, then it must be true! In addition to this quietness, Andrew also exhibits great faith. When the Disciples despair about not having enough food to feed the crowds who are coming into the wilderness to hear Jesus, it is Andrew who brings to The Lord the boy with the 5 barley loaves and the 2 fish. And so, the crowds have more than enough to eat. (See Jn.6:1-13) What about you? When you speak or act, do people understand that they are in the presence of one whose words are carefully chosen and truthful, and whose actions are a witness to your faith in God?

Who will see you as “the disciple of quiet faith” today?