

Theme for 2018

**WE ARE THE ARMY OF GOD &
WE ARE ARMED AND DANGEROUS!**

“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV)



This Week’s Thought – March 4, 2018

“What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?” 1 Corinthians 4:7 (NIV)

At one time or another, we have all made the statement, “Life is a gift”. Even if maybe you have never said it out loud, you have at least thought it and believe it as truth. What exactly are we meaning when we make or believe the statement, “Life is a gift”? In saying or thinking this, we often emphasize the value and dignity of every human life, as we rightly should. Yet what do we learn if we weight these words towards the idea of “gift?” Life, our very existence, does not originate with us nor do we will ourselves into being. Creation itself, is gift. It is the overflow of love from the eternal love of the Almighty God. We cannot demand to exist, neither can we claim life as a right. All is gift.

Paul reminds us of the human temptation to construct false realities. We (as a society and culture) boast of our accomplishments and believe them to define our sense of worth and success. We exploit the marginalized and oppressed, yet believe it is a necessary step towards growth. We ignore the desires and dreams of our neighbors, seeking the good of everyone only to the extent it is first and foremost the good for me (individually). In short, we take and demand what is meant to be given and received.

Lent is a 40-day journey of reorientation to the true nature of reality. We are invited to realign our stories with God’s story, to carve out space to learn what is good, beautiful, and true. It is an opportunity to invite the light of Christ into the dark places of our hearts and lives; and though it is often a painful process of self-denial and repentance, the aim is the restoration of gift.

March 4, 2018

To receive our own life as a gift given from the Lord, and to rejoice in the beauty and diversity of His creation, join Him in calling it “good!” As Ignatius of Loyola once said, *“All the things in this world are gifts of God, created for us, to be the means by which we can come to know him better, love him more surely, and serve him more faithfully.”*

“Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” (James 1:17)

Application: How can you more fully embrace and celebrate the gift of life this Lenten season?

Prayer of reflection you might pray this week: “Father God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully and completely, we accept You. I thank You and I adore You. I love You with my whole being, because my being is in Your being, my spirit is rooted in Your Spirit. Fill me then with love, and let me be bound together in love with everyone around me, as we go our diverse ways, united in one Spirit which makes You present to the world, and which makes You witness to the ultimate reality that is love. Assist me to live a holy life and to grow in goodness and grace that I may be strengthened throughout this Lenten season and year. I await Your voice. This is my prayer in the matchless, wonderful and compassionate name of Jesus. Amen!”

“And then God answered: “Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. This vision-message is a witness pointing to what’s coming. It aches for the coming—it can hardly wait! And it doesn’t lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It’s on its way. It will come right on time.” Habakkuk 2:2-3 (MSG)

Yours in Christ, Pastor King