



SUNDAY MATTERS

Week # 1 – First Sunday of Lent

We get offended, put off and angry by so many things - traffic, being late, relationships, not meeting our goals. So often its over little things and sometimes over everything! Of course this slows us down and wears us out. Often all we need to do is "get over it", but the how can be a stumbling block. In our new series for the season of Lent we will ask ourselves what are the stumbling blocks to getting over stuff.

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan.

Mark 1:12



Each of us in our life gets offended or upset. It may come from something that breaks a law or rule or something we simply see as distasteful or unpleasant. Being offended in life is inevitable.

You can't get through a year, a month, a week, or even a day without being offended in some way. Some offenses that we experience are simply perceived. We feel offended or hurt even though no real harm or injustice has been done to us. It is just our wounded pride or bruised ego. Then, there are real offenses. We live in a sin-stained world and people will lie to us or cheat us or steal from us or harm us in some other way. Sometimes these lead to anger, and sometimes that anger can be lingering and it can slow us down or impact our own success. Offenses are a trap, they are a temptation.

As we begin Lent we are painted with a picture in our Gospel of Jesus in the desert faced with temptation. In this encounter in the desert Jesus comes to portrays for us who He is and what He is about. Now Mark the Gospel writer does not go into the same detail of this happening as Matthew or Luke - we are not listed the temptations that Jesus faced - just that He was. So what is Temptation? Well for our series we will go with the working definition that it is "*an invitation to embrace self-interest*"

Jesus was tempted even though he was following the direction of the Holy Spirit. He didn't get tempted because He was apart from God's will but because He was in it. We should avoid situations that lead us into unnecessary temptation but we will never be able to avoid it completely. Inevitably, we will be offended by others and tempted to harbor the offense, internalize it, and allow it to live in our hearts. If we allow it in, we risk becoming entitled, bitter, and self-centered people. The fruit of living with an offended heart is never good.

If we are not careful, we will take offenses into our heart and harbor them there. When we hold on to an offense, we become angry and entitled and self-centered. If this grows roots within us, then it is the invitation to look so much at what I want or need that the other becomes unimportant to our life. Yet what we must remember is that when your life is all about you, you don't just hurt yourself, you lose yourself.

You see the more we just look at ourselves, or remain locked in the mud of our own existence, the more we miss the opportunities that God gives us to discover who we are by interacting with others and learning through such. We have a choice about how to handle offenses. Rather than falling into a trap, we can choose to deal with temptation (“an invitation to embrace self-interest”) in a healthy manner.

Jesus taught in the Gospel what we need to get over first – ourselves! We need to fight the sense of entitlement which leads to becoming a service orientated person. Where we believe we have the right to it.

- Pray today for the grace to recognize the temptation to harbor and nurture offense. Pray for a humble heart that is not so sensitive and easily offended.
- Ask God to help you identify how much you need to grow in this area and how you can learn to handle offenses and temptation in a healthy way.

O Lord, during these days of Lent
as we prepare to walk with your Son into the desert of our lives,
remind us always that you are with us, that we are never alone,
that we have nothing to fear, but everything to hope for.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

During our previous Message Series “Defining Moments” we journeyed together through Matthew Kelly’s book “Perfectly Yourself”. We continue our reflection of that for a few weeks during Lent.

Seventh Lesson – Unburden Yourself

The call of the 7th Chapter is to **Simplify**... to remove from our life that which clutters our journey toward being who God calls us to be. It is a pretty appropriate continuation with the theme of our Lenten journey.

*Look at the Five Points Outlined in Chapter 7. Scribe for yourself the next steps in your **Road Map** by asking:*

- What in your life do you need to “unclutter”? What invitation need a “no”? What places can you fit more “God time” into?
- Where do you need to “unplug” from? Maybe conversations, conducts, relationships where you need remove the “unhealthy” to replace it with the “healthy”
- What can you be more mindful of as you seek to “dejunk” your life ?

Pray with me this week.....

Jesus I am looking for you
Jesus I want to see where you live
Jesus I want to come and see every day
(now be still for 5 minutes – let God speak)

See you Sunday!