

Genesis 11: 1-18

James 1: 12-18

Mark 1: 9-15

John 6:1-15

In the Name of the Father and of the +Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lent is when the Church emphasizes spiritual warfare. We recount the Lord's fasting and temptation by Satan in the desert.

So, Why are you so weary? Because you toil for that which does not satisfy. You seek love and acceptance from demons, food from garbage collectors, loyalty from traitors. You want fame, honor, riches, and luxury. You want prestige and devotion but engage in debauchery and perversion! What kind of a people hold up Paris Hilton as a hero? You waste away dreaming of and scheming for these forbidden things, forgetting those who love you, who raised you, who have sacrificed themselves for you. Pushing away even your Savior for pleasures of the flesh. Do you cause hardship in your household, in the church, at work? Do you cause strife and create division? Do you want your way rather than follow church doctrine?

Repent! You are obsessed with yourself! And there is never enough. It never works. It never satisfies. It leaves you tired, frustrated, sad, angry, lonely, and afraid. You are like a crowd on a mountainside that came seeking earthly things and forgot to plan ahead, so far gone that they could not return home without food or they'd faint along the way.

And so God, as God always does, provides. He is faithful and kind. He is not holding out on you. He loves you. Sit down. Quit scrambling around and trying to get your piece of the pie by violence or deception. Sit down in green pastures. Buy and eat without money. Buy wine and milk without price. Eat that which is good. *Let your soul delight.* For man does not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds from the Mouth of God. Give up the things of the past. Turn from your unrighteous thoughts. Forsake your wickedness. Return to the Lord who called you by name out of the deep and made you His. He will have mercy upon you. He will be your God. He will abundantly pardon you and give you peace. He will give your rest. He will satisfy.

Five barley loaves and two small fish are nothing. But out of nothing God makes something: a ram caught in the thicket, a goat sent off into the wilderness with the sins of the people pressed into his head, a carcass consumed in flame while its blood drips down the doorposts and the angel of death passes over, an overflowing cup pressed without labor or toil, a Man hanging on the cross for crimes He did not commit. Five thousand men plus women and children are nothing. But out of nothing God makes something: A people who were no people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a chaste and immaculate Bride redeemed from slavery and death.

Bread and wine are nothing. Water is nothing. Words are nothing. But God makes something! He provides in this wild place. He washes your feet. He gives refuge, sanctuary. He makes for peace and rest. He restores joy. He binds wounds, relieves the aches and pains of your broken hearts, comforts, consoles, and soothes your jaded mind. Sit down in the green pastures of His Holy Word. Eat His Body. Drink His Blood. Hear the holy absolution. Enjoy the sure mercies of David, whose Son has given His life for you, rescued you from Hell, and re-opened paradise through His resurrection.

The endless, selfish hunger of man judges that five barley loaves and two small fish will never be enough. But God's Word does not fail. Whoever believes in Him, even if he die, will never die. Twelve baskets of fragments cannot quite contain the bounty after all have been fed and satisfied. Five barley loaves and two small fish, one lacking cruet of oil and a handful of flour, one Righteous Man who dies for the nation, were more than sufficient. Your Redeemer lives. The endless, selfish hunger of man is false and deceiving for the heart is exceedingly wicked. But the providence, grace, and mercy of God are never lacking. He does not lie. He provides.

Surely mercy shall follow you all the days of your life. For God's Name has been placed upon you. God's Son has died and risen for you. God's Spirit has made you His temple. No one can take you from Him. Rest here, O weary ones. Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad with her that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation. They do not give milk for sustenance, but the lifeblood of God, the purification of your body, mind, and soul. Your cup runneth over and stains you as clean and pure as new fallen snow.

In +Jesus' Name. Amen.

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