

Lent at Lakeside
My Heart as Sanctuary, My Life as Prayer

When we talk about the season of Lent, we often speak of a journey that carries us through the wilderness of penitence and self denial to the garden of resurrection and the abundance of new life. We seek out spiritual disciplines like prayer, Bible reading, fasting, and meditation that might help us become more Christlike. Too often, however, when we wake up on Easter morning, we find that we are no different than when we went to bed on Ash Wednesday.

Most years, we try to do the work of Lent outside ourselves instead of focusing inward. The inside work is the work of the heart. Perhaps if we begin to think of our heart as the true sanctuary where we meet God and of our lives as the arena in which our prayers find traction, we might awake on Easter morning as changed people.

This Lenten season we will be expanding upon and rethinking some of the ideas presented to us by Dr. Luke Powery during our recent Turnage event. Dr. Powery used the spirituals to frame his messages on the Christian life, “the life worth living.” The term “spiritual” is derived from “spiritual song,” a term found in Ephesians 5:18-19: “be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts.” African American spirituals are deep expressions of faith which originated in the heart. Likewise, the heart should be the starting point for our Lenten pilgrimage.

The journey of Lent requires us to take a closer look at who we are and where we came from. Using the poem, “Where I’m From” by Appalachian poet George Ella Lyon, artist and author Jan Richardson created her own version of the poem:

I am from orange groves
and old Florida,
from a house my parents built
in a field my grandfather gave them.
Black-eyed Susans grew there in the spring,
so thick we played hide and seek
simply by kneeling among them.

I am from a town
with more cows than people,
from Judy and from Joe,
from generations that have grown up
in one place.

I am from peanut butter and
honey sandwiches every morning,

from my grandmothers’ kitchens,
from Thanksgiving feasts in the
community park,
from Christmas Eves in the
white painted church
among the pine trees.

I am from the dictionary we kept
by the dinner table
where we ate words like food,
from hours and days in libraries,
from miles of books.
I am from the path they have made.

© Jan Richardson, “Where I’m From,” *The Advent Door*
(December 7, 2008).

Using this poem as your guide, we invite you to write your own spiritual song, a poem about what has helped shape your life. Jan Richardson offers some useful prompts: “So where are you from? What are the places, the people, the experiences that formed your path? What holds your roots? How does where you’re from help you understand who you are? How does it enable you to make a way for the one who comes in this and every season?”

We will share these poems with one another for our daily devotions during this Lenten season as we travel together toward Easter. Please include a favorite verse or passage of scripture that has been meaningful to your faith. If you prefer to write another type of devotion reflecting on this year’s theme, we will welcome it as well. You may send your devotions to the church at lakesiderm@embarqmail.com or to Elizabeth at edwardselizabeth@embarqmail.com. Each day the devotions will be posted on our website and sent by email to the persons on our list.

Grace for the Journey,

Jody

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February 14: Ash Wednesday
“It’s Me, O Lord”
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; II Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; John 6:1-6, 16-21
Communion and the Imposition of Ashes

February 18: The First Sunday in Lent
“My Heart as Sanctuary”
Genesis 3:1-10; Mark 1:9-15

February 25: The Second Sunday in Lent
Will You Wake Up Different on Easter Morning?
Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Mark 8:31-38

March 4: The Third Sunday in Lent
What Do We Love More than Jesus?
Exodus 20:1-17; John 2:13-22

March 11: The Fourth Sunday in Lent
What Do We Love More Than Our Neighbor?
Leviticus 19:1-18; Luke 10:25-37

March 18: The Fifth Sunday in Lent
“What Do We Love More Than Ourselves?”
Genesis 18:1-15; Luke 10:38-42

March 25: Palm Sunday
“Why Are You Celebrating?”
Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Mark 11:1-11

March 29: Maundy Thursday
“My Life as Prayer”
Exodus 12:1-14; I Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35
Communion

April 1: Resurrection Sunday
“My Heart as Sanctuary, My Life as Prayer”
Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18