

Enuf Already!

Liturgical Year A

Meditate on This

January 15, 2023

Isaiah 49:1-7

When I go shopping, I ignore the advice of the food gurus and the vegetarians, I go for the calorie's, fat building, cholesterol laden foods. One of my favorite digs is heading for the deli to see if they have my fully cooked whole chickens for sale for between \$9 and \$11.

Today I went a little over my budget and bought a 1 lb. 8 of chicken for \$11.05. My fully cooked breaded chicken is filled with stocking goodies like modified food starch, spice propylene glycol, and modified wheat flour.

When I get that "baby" home still piping hot I tear off that leg and thigh with people made, crusty skin, and my stomach screams, "Dennis, you know that rich stuff creates a stomachache." Trying to do what is right and smart, I tear off all that skin dressing and eat the meat, that is what it is all about.

This is only my fourth exegesis, and I am tired of hearing about someone being called to some great deed. Abraham and Sarah were childless in the Tigris Euphrates Valley so they thought a new territory might bring forth a son. Moses was interrupted by a burning bush, Paul was struck by lightning, and Jesus had a dove flying over him.

In today's mysterious text, scholars debate over who this "suffering servant" was who received this special calling to be a "light to the gentiles." Some argue the suffering servant was Isaiah, others Israel some God herself. Then the text delves into the servant's calling, his despondency for he thought his work was in vain, followed by a new task. Whoever this servant was he/she was a talented speaker and was meek and mild.

The calorie laden chicken skin in this text is his calling. I am growing weary of these miraculous callings. Let's get to the meat of the matter. The meat of this text is not about the calling but how as life moves on, we are all offered a revised task, a greater mission.

The good news about not only this text but the entire Bible is that we have all been given "swords", tools to bring about change creating a better neighborhood, a cleaner world, a place where racism is no longer tolerated. A place where the gay community can feel at home and the migrants can be housed, fed, and cared for.

Wm. Barclay whose set of N.T. commentaries I use said, "there are two great days in a person's life, the day he was born and the day we discover why?"

FOR THAT MY FRIENDS WE HAVE ALL BEEN EQUIPPED WITH A NEW TASK. WHENEVER WE SEE OUR WORK IN VAIN, WE CAN ALWAYS BEGIN ANEW, SOMEWHERE ELSE.

New Testament Reading

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Imagine if you can be CEO of five new companies extending from Italy to Jerusalem. The cities where your companies are located are in Galatia, Philippi, Corinth, Ephesus, and Thessalonica. Each of your five new companies have their own unique problems, membership is made up of rich and poor, slaves and free and there are no bi laws. You are flying by the seat of your pants. To get to work you travel by ship, walk or ride a mule. Walking between some of these job sites takes up to eighteen days. Oh, before I forget, there is no salary. Your only salary is a part time job "tent making" or better known as leather working.

The above job description was undertaken by Apostle Paul, one time known as fanatic Saul, killer of Christians. One time Paul spent 18 months in establishing the church in Corinth. Months later while

helping another church many miles away Paul received a letter from the Church in Corinth, pleading for help. Unable to “fly in” Paul writes the book called, 1 Corinthians, this is a substitute for a personal visit.

Paul offers us a window to the life of the early church. Like any new business the church in Corinth was struggling with their identity, their beliefs, what practices to do and how to perform them. Some members were involved with cults and other gods. It was Paul’s task to get the superior minded people to calm down, support those doing a good ministry, and build up their new belief system in Jesus and a new look at a caring, loving God.

Early in chapter 1 Paul uses a rhetorical device where he sweetens their ears with compliments followed by admonishes. As was well known, whoever starts out with unpleasant words antagonizes his hearers.

Verses 1-9 cover a preface, a prescript, and a prayer of thanksgiving. Letters like Paul’s are always a one-sided conversation but we can all learn to begin with a spirit of goodness before we enter the exhorting stage.

Today we still live in a multi-cultured community, and we all have much to learn about good communication skills.

Dennis Siebert