

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"THE WAVES COME IN" 2/14/24

For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jer 29:11)

Another day in paradise, then the tide comes in and washes away your sand castle. Tides are out of our control. So, we can cry, I did. I'd worked so hard on it. Drew up plans, mixed my sand and water just so. It was perfect and it made a picture suitable for framing. Then blam. Another loss. Not sure I can handle one more. I blame myself for wasting the time and energy building the stupid thing. Why put myself out there and do a new thing, a different thing, something which is bound to fail?

Wrong. What is under our control is how we react to the obstacles we face every day, all of us. How do we witness to the love of God, to the strength and mercy of God, to the amazing grace He shows us every day, if all we do is doubt, complain, and quit – or never try?

It is natural to ask, "Why" when horrid things happen, it's understandable. We also need to realize, though, these losses, challenges, these waves and fires happen to everybody, so why not to me? It is important to face the fact our tears, our heartbreak accomplish nothing. What can we do? How will we make something good out of something we perceive as bad? Will it put us out of commission or give us a new mission? Will it bring us closer to God or will we turn from Him? Will we give up, go back to bed and pull the sheet over our heads, or get up, face this new difficulty, and make it sorry it picked on us?

In Isaiah we are told, "God will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as He hears it, He answers you. And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left. Then you will defile your carved idols overlaid with silver and your gold-plated metal images. You will scatter them as unclean things. You will say to them, "Be gone!" (Isa 30:19-22)

God allows the waters of affliction to come in, but with them extraordinary promises. God hears and answers our prayers. God surrounds us with His presence, He guides us and gives us courage. God gives us wisdom to make decisions on how we will react to this latest tide. He gives us the power to destroy sin as we face our tumults.

Today we receive a great Valentine, it is Ash Wednesday. As we enter into the time of Lent, as Jesus journeys to Jerusalem, as we walk toward the crucifixion; we have God's grace to know of Christ's Resurrection. We know what Christ has done for us through water and prayer, how He has shown us His victory over death, what He endured to show us His forgiveness and love.

Please pray with me:

As we remember we came from dust and to dust we shall return, God of love and forgiveness, thank You. Thank You for strengthening us, for giving us Your peace when the tide comes in and washes away our castles. Thank You for the picture we took which reminds us of Your goodness. Thank You for sending Your Word to live among us, to identify with us and still love us. Thank You for the ultimate Valentine's Day gift of true love. May we remember Your love and forgiveness as we begin our Lenten Journey.

Amen.