

When I was in seminary, I had a class on twice a week from 9:30-10:45. This particular professor would announce a break at 10 each class period. Only my 3 hour classes got a break in the middle but he would stop every class for a 5 minute break. After several weeks, we finally asked, don't take this the wrong way, we love the break, but why? He answered, well I have my coffee in the morning and I'm old and I can't get through the whole class after my coffee. We all chuckled. This sparked several conversations over the next couple of weeks about what kind of coffee and other things. Finally he told shared that when he stopped to get his coffee, a non-fat, decaf cappuccino, the barista called out "one why bother." He chuckled as he said this, so we asked him why did he bother? Because I still enjoy the habit.

Sometimes I hear people ask why do we bother? Sometimes I'm the one asking do we bother? We keep doing the right things, nothing else around us changes so why do we bother? Why do we keep practicing the 10 Commandments? Why do we keep practicing loving God and loving neighbor? Why do we pray, why do we study, why do we live the gospel? Lent, is that time to turn introspective, to look inside and see what it is that we need to change. We've talked about our weariness since we've change so much. Last week we talked about giving things up so that we grow. Even when we are fruitful, God cuts us back so we can grow more fruit. The idea of giving up, changing, is a message that is counter to what's in the world?

Our gospel reading today has Jesus, not once, but twice telling those around him he is the light of the world. After spending the whole season of Advent and Christmas looking and exploring about Jesus as the light, we are just like the first disciples trying to understand. Jesus is the light of the

world, a light to shine for all people. Jesus is the that light shines in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it. That light in December and January is so needed. We feel the darkness so acutely that we put lights everywhere, on trees, on our roofs, doors – everywhere we can think of. We have deep satisfaction when our candles are lit in the darkness, when we hear the reading from John chapter 1 and sing Silent Night. And yet when Spring arrives and the we move to each day being a little longer we don't focus anymore on the light. We've moved and don't quite see the need. We think of all the things we can do now that we have more light, eating outside, going for hikes, sitting under a tree and read a book. We've lost the message and missed the point because it's too often all about us.

God loves us so deeply and dearly God calls us to share that love with other people. Why we bother is then central to our faith. The world so desperately needs to hear, to see, to taste, to know that Jesus is the light of the world. We need the constant reminder not just of the Light but that the Light is the World.

I shared in a December children's time of these beautiful gloom chasers that my grandmother, my mom and my dad made using shattered windshield glass. They carefully took the broken pieces and transformed them into pieces of art. They crafted it so that the light could shine through, even the most broken of glass. I've had this one my whole life. It has always been in my bedroom or in my home. And yet, when I conquered my fear of the dark, more often than not it just sits there without a light. With the time change last week, it's dark in the morning as we are called to wake up and get going. No one wants to move. I forget just how much we need the light so slowly, gently wake us from our sleep.

What place do we put in God in our lives? Is God simply around and we call upon him as we have need? Is God central in what we do and what we say? Our call this week is to look first at where God is in our lives and ask ourselves if this is where God should be. And after looking inward, we are called to look outward to those places where doom and gloom are around us and find how we might bear Jesus the light of the world, whether in thought, word or deed, as we prepare for Easter.

When we let God shape us, I wonder how the light can shine through us in new ways? I wonder that if we've done our work well in this season, how that glorious Easter morning may be different for us as we hear the words I am the resurrection and the life. I wonder how we see the work of God that has come full circle from "in him was life and the life was the light of all people" in the incarnation to the I am the light of the world that brings the resurrection and the life?

*When the song of the angels is stilled,*

*When the star in the sky is gone,*

*When the kings and princes are home,*

*When the shepherds are back with their flock,*

*The work of Christmas begins:*

*To find the lost,*

*To heal the broken,*

*To feed the hungry,*

*To release the prisoner,*

*To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among others,  
To make music in the heart.*

*Howard Thurman*

As we're moving towards Easter, have we done this Christmas work? Have we found the lost? Healed the broken? Fed the hungry? Released the prisoner? Rebuilt the nation? Brought peace among others? Have we made music in the heart? If not, may we take these next 2 weeks and let the light shine through us, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.