

WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM, WILL HAVE ETERNAL LIFE

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT - 2CHRONICLES 36:14-23 /// JOHN 3:14-21

Why did God pick Israel to be His “chosen people”?

Surely not because of their military power, for they were living in slavery in Egypt; not for their number, for they were the smallest of all nations; not for their loyalty, for throughout their history Israel had repeatedly walked away from the Covenant relationship with God, which they had sworn to keep, and had often committed the sin of idolatry!

Why, then, did God continue to send his messengers among his people, and to call them to repentance and conversion?

BECAUSE GOD IS LOVE (1John 4:16). God chooses what appears small and insignificant in humans' eyes, and loves unconditionally!

God is always faithful to His promises. Therefore, even when Israel is in exile in enemy territory, far from home, feeling no hope, and seeing no possible way in the future, to return home, God turns the situation around: the impossible becomes possible. The pagan King is inspired to allow the people of Israel to leave and return to their home country.

In the Bible's Old Testament we see what God can do for those who put their trust in Him, even in the midst of a seemingly impossible situation.

It is a lesson to be learned and to be remembered by us today. God is the same always, and He is always faithful.

What God did then for Israel, He can do also for us TODAY.

During this PANDEMIC we have hopefully realized that we cannot rely on the things of this world, to achieve the happiness and peace our hearts desire; even human relationships are fragile, and so is human life.

The most advanced technology cannot offer us what we really want, that is to live happily forever!

Today's Gospel reading, taken from the well known John 3:16, reveals where and from whom we can receive what our hearts are after: “**GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, SO THAT EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM MAY NOT PERISH BUT MAY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.**”

There you have it. It is **GOD, ONLY GOD**, the Creator of all that is visible and invisible, who can give freely what our hearts desire. God's Son, Jesus, took upon himself the **PENALTY** or **PUNISHMENT** for the sin of humanity, for turning away from God, and for wanting to replace God with itself, in its search for power and control.

As for the ancient Israel, the modern day **SIN** of **IDOLATRY** leads humanity to self exile, in enemy territory, in spiritual darkness, far from the **LOVE** of God.

Out of **LOVE** for each one of us, Jesus willingly accepted awful suffering and death on the cross, so that you and I may look at Him when we are experiencing hardship, illnesses or death, and may remember that we are not going through it alone, because He is suffering and dying with us.

God can also change our situations around, if we believe in Him and say with confidence “**JESUS, I TRUST IN YOU**”.

We, Christians, do not live for this world, nor to remain in it, but to be in God now and eternally after our earthly journey is over. This is why God became MAN: to lead us to NEW LIFE, ETERNAL LIFE, THROUGH HIS PASSION, DEATH AND RESURRECTION. WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM, WILL HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. WE LIVE, BECAUSE HE LIVES!