

Exegetical Notes for March 2020

March 1, 2020 – Lent 1 - Matthew 4:1-11

The temptation of Jesus

- As we begin the Lenten journey, we are invited to trust God for all our needs.
- “If you are the Son of God...” The devil tries to sow doubt as he tempts. In what ways might our doubts, or doubts sown in us by others, lead us to make poor choices or give in to temptation?
- The temptations could be interpreted as wealth (self sufficiency), power, and fame or influence. All demonstrate a lack of trust in God. How might Jesus’ responses inspire us when we face temptations in these areas?

March 8, 2020 - Lent 2 - John 3:1-17

Jesus talks with Nicodemus

- We are invited to see and be in reality as God would have it.
- What does it mean to be “born from above” (or born again) in the context Jesus’ teaching about the nature and reality of the Kingdom of Heaven? How does this inform our Lenten journey and our Christian life?
- Jesus references an event in Numbers 21. How does he self-identify with the bronze serpent? How does this foreshadow the work of the cross?

March 15, 2020 – Lent 3

- Jesus has a conversation with Samaritan woman that seems to break all the rules, but in doing so teaches us something about ministry. In this passage, Jesus' identity is made known beyond Israel, revealing God's plan for all his children.
- In how many ways does Jesus break the social conventions of his day? Why does he do it? What is the result?
- The event could be described as "prophetic evangelism." Jesus demonstrates that he knows this stranger deep down, and this leads her to want to know him more. How can we in the Church learn from our Master and reach out in this way to bring in the outsider?

March 22, 2020 – Lent 4 - John 9:1-41

Jesus is the Light of the World. We need light to see.

- There is a lot going on in this passage. The disciples ask a theological question about the origins of a man's blindness. Jesus tells them that they are asking the wrong questions. The questions should be "what can God do?" Light allows us to see. Jesus, as the Light of the World, takes away blindness. Only through Jesus can we see as people born from above. What sort of things might we be blind to that the Light of the World would help us to see?
- If we claim to see but do not respond; if we believe we know everything already but do not lead people out of darkness, we are blind. In what other kinds of ways might we remain in darkness?

March 29, 2020 – Lent 5 - John 11:1-45

The Raising of Lazarus.

- Jesus is Master of all creation and as the “Resurrection and the Life” he even has mastery over death. As with the man born blind in last Sunday’s gospel lesson, Jesus understands Lazarus’ affliction as a means by which God can be glorified. Death is the ultimate darkness, but Jesus is light there too.
- Why do you think that Jesus waited so long to return to Bethany after hearing of Lazarus being so ill?
- Jesus identifies himself to be the “Resurrection and the Life.” How might that be good news?
- The result of Lazarus walking out of the tomb was that “Many of the Jews... who had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.” In what ways were eyes opened in this story? How was blindness healed?
- What implications does the raising of Lazarus have for the individual? The Church? The world?