

3rd Sunday of Lent C

Every now and then the key message in our readings comes from the Psalm – NB Psalm 103

The Lord is kind and merciful

He pardons all our iniquities, heals all your ills
Redeems your life from destruction,
Crowns you with kindness and compassion

The Lord is kind and merciful

The Lord secures justice and rights of the oppressed
He has made His way known to Moses
And His deeds to the children of Israel

The Lord is kind and merciful

Merciful and gracious is the Lord
Slow to anger and abiding in kindness
For as the heavens are high above the earth
So surpassing is His kindness to those
fear Him

The Lord is kind and merciful

Now watch this:

Our 1st reading today was from Exodus – Moses and the burning bush

But let me ask you – Why was Moses up in the mountains tending sheep?

Wasn't he brought up by Pharaoh's daughter?

He killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave – He's Hiding in the "Land of Midian" –

Starting a new life in anonymity (to cover his sin)

Sound familiar?

Have you ever tried to cover up your sin – to hide it and move on?

Nice plan – BUT – it's not God's plan

God doesn't want us hiding – stuck in our sin – He wants to forgive us

The Lord is kind and merciful

That is what St. Paul is talking about in the 2nd reading from COR

"I don't want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters that our ancestors were under a cloud"

ALL passed through the Red Sea ALL ate heavenly food (manna)

ALL drank water from the rock YET despite all this – they sinned

They grumbled against God

So take care – if THEY can fall – So can You

BUT - The Lord is kind and merciful

That is why, in the Gospel, Jesus says **"If you don't repent, you will perish"**

The Psalm said - ***The Lord is kind and merciful***

But to get the mercy – you need to repent

Do you understand the image of the fig tree Jesus uses?.

We are the fig tree – and God expects fruit!

Let me tell you a story – my father worked for Sears Roebuck (back in the day)

at the end of the summer the Garden Shop would close down (unsold were usually trash)

They had been watered, set out in the sun, but not enough – now dried out sticks

Fruit trees need water, sun, AND fertilizer

My Dad went to a local horse farm, filled up garbage cans with manure

What is the farmer's solution to a tree with no fruit?

MANURE

Are you bearing fruit? Not really.

Have you repented of your sin? (& abstain from it) Not really.

Well then don't be surprised if God sends you MANURE

NB - God will break you down so He can build you up

why? The Lord is kind and merciful

Christian lives should bear fruit – pear trees bear pears, apple trees bear apples – Christians?

Gal 5 - Love Joy Peace Patience Generosity Kindness Self-Control

We need to repent in order to receive His mercy – Welcome to Lent

In Lent we don't have to repent – we GET TO REPENT – we GET TO BE FORGIVEN

Why? ***The Lord is kind and merciful***