**IN JESUS’ NAME, LK. 4:5-7, COL. 2:13-15, PHIL. 2:8-11, 1 COR. 15:20,21, 24, 25, FEB. 25/24.**

Last week we completed the trifecta—we began Lent, and managed to acknowledge and celebrate both Valentine’s Day and Family Day.

 But today I want to move us along as we reflect on our journey to Jerusalem. 2 weeks ago we looked at **the Transfiguration**, when Jesus, along with His disciples Peter, James & John went up Mount Horeb, where Jesus was transfigured before them, with His face shining like the sun & His clothes appearing as white as snow. And more supernatural things kept happening—**Moses & Elijah appeared with Jesus & talked with Him about His departure,** the Hebrew word, **“exodos”.** It was Moses who led the Israelites out of Egypt, **freeing them from their bondage, their slavery** to Pharaoh. In the Old Testament, Malachi prophesied that Elijah would come with the Messiah. **Elijah never died**; he was whisked up to heaven in a chariot of fire. Well, here it was, just as foretold, all coming together. **Jesus** was receiving the highest human affirmation possible; He **would free all people from their bondage to sin & He too, would never die—though He did indeed die physically on the cross**, but more about that later.

 And **in the coup de grace** of the Transfiguration, God the Father speaks out of the cloud that surrounded them: “This is My Son whom I love. Listen to Him.” That clinched it. **It was clear that Jesus was heading to Jerusalem where He would face every indignity & die in unmatched agony on a cross. He was heading resolutely for Jerusalem. The Transfiguration showed** that glory would come through the cross, but the road to there would be immersed in humiliation for Christ. Before glory, we too, must resolve to press on day by day in the trenches of ministry, serving others, even through to the cross. **Lent is that time to prepare ourselves**

**for the resolute struggle to the cross as, though not nearly to the extent, Jesus did**.

 **But why?** Why would He do that? What could possibly be accomplished? I want to look in a rather unusual place for the answer. John Eldredge, in *Moving Mountains: Praying with Passion, Confidence & Authority* shows us what was at stake. But surprisingly it comes in his answer about **what it means to say “Amen” & what it means to pray in Jesus’ Name”.** Just so you know, “Amen” doesn’t translate as “That’s it, God. I’m finished for now.” Its real significance is “**Yes! Let it be so!”** It’s using the authority of God to connect with your prayer. It’s a declaration, a command, **“Let this be done!”** It’s not a see-you-later.

 “**In Jesus’ Name” is even more of a command**. It isn’t just another “over out&”. It’s really saying, I pray this according to Jesus’ will. It is using the authority of the author of the galaxies to cement, to lock in place, to enforce the power of what has been prayed.

 **So what’s at stake here?** **The closer you zero in on the spiritual realm, the more you’ll see it runs on authority. But the question is, “Whose authority?”** What is at stake is nothing less than **a collision of kingdoms**. Just like Star Wars, but for real. For a kingdom to exist, it has to have a king, & **kings yes you guessed it, run on authority**.

 **In the book of Daniel (10:13-14**), Daniel waits 3 weeks for an angel to come with a message. Why? **Because he’s been blocked by a territorial spirit** ruling over the kingdom of Persia. And—are you ready—**the angel has to enlist the help of Michael the archangel, who has more authority**. The angel got through the blockade because of the greater authority & power of the archangel Michael. That’s what we do **when we use Jesus’ Name**—we invoke His authority.

 You may remember that **when God created Adam & Eve, He gave them the earth & the authority to rule over it.** But **they forfeited that authority by their disobedience. That is how Satan became the prince of this world (Jn. 14:30).**

 Now fast-forward to **Satan tempting Jesus** as Jesus completed a 40 day fast (you may also remember that 40 denotes “complete”. Jesus did everything He needed to do). Luke 4:5-7 says that Satan took Jesus to a high point & showed Him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world, saying, “**I will give you all their authority & splendor, for they have been given to me, & I can give it to anyone I want to. So, if you worship me it will be yours.”**

 **It was his to offer because it had been turned over to him because of our sin, our disobedience**. Prince of this world means ruler of this world. And he brought devastation to the world, just like other evil rulers did, whether Ghengis Khan, Hitler, Stalin, Putin…**When an evil ruler comes into the world it allows evil to enter the world. Authority shifts to darkness**.

 **So, here’s the why. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world to win it all back. And He headed resolutely for Jerusalem & did win it all back. Humankind was dethroned from the position of authority by the sin of Adam & Eve. It could only be undone by the atonement for those sins**. Jesus, by living a life of perfect obedience to the Father was the only one who could provide the perfect atonement for our sins by the way of the cross & His death. T**hat action was the knockout blow for Satan & all the angels of darkness**.

 **Have you ever felt discouraged because** it seemed that the events of life were just stacking up against you, when every move you made seemed to backfire & make your situation worse, even hopeless? You were very well-intentioned but the result & the criticism just wore you out, you just felt like packing it in. My guess is that most of us have seen times like that.  **Thankfully**, for most of us, that kind of experience doesn’t go on forever.

 But **have you ever really thought about what Jesus encountered?** There wasn’t a day that He didn’t have people opposing Him, trying to trap Him, trying to take Him down, mocking Him, challenging Him, misrepresenting what He was saying. It never stopped. Aren’t you glad Jesus didn’t just “pack it in”? Someone was in His face all the time. **No one has ever endured** the intensity of the full force of the devil’s attacks like He did. Far & away the highest strategy of the forces of darkness is to diminish the deity of Jesus & to discredit His work & claims.

 **Colossians 2:13-15**: “God forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code with its regulations, that was against us & stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And **having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”**

 **Ephesians 6:12: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world & against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms**.

 **So here it is. By the cross our Father & Jesus caught the enemy totally off guard, undermined his claims, disarmed the authority of his stolen throne. The evil one & all his allies have lost their right to authority & that authority has been given (back) to Jesus.**

**Philippians 2:8-11**: “Jesus humbled Himself & became obedient to death—even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place & gave Him the name that is above every name, that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow**, in heaven, on earth & under the earth, & every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father.”

 **This victory, the overthrow of Satan’s right to rule, the transfer of authority & power to the Son of God is what Jesus was talking about after the resurrection when He said, “All authority in heaven & on earth has been given to Me.” (Matt. 28:18). All authority** in the spiritual realms, in the heavens & on earth, has been given over to Jesus. Because of that, redemption can happen. Hallelujah!

 **But, the invasion of the Kingdom of God is still unfolding. 1 Cor. 15:20-21, 24-25:** “Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man …**Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority & power**. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

 **That’s pretty helpful. “Until”, gives us a different picture of how Jesus is presently ruling & why the world is still so chaotic. Are all His enemies under His feet?** For sure, not. Jesus is reigning until He finishes what He began. The enemy keeps on fighting.

 **And that is why we invoke the kingdom in the Lord’s Prayer**. “Your Kingdom come, **Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven**.” Why else would we be prompted to say, “Your Kingdom come?” As partners in His mission, this is how Jesus wants us to begin this prayer. **Because His Kingdom has not come everywhere or to everyone; His will is not always done on earth as it is in heaven.**

 **During Lent**, we concentrate on all that Jesus gave up for us, all that He did for us & all that He continues to do for us. **And while His will is not always done on earth as it is in heaven, He is not finished with us, nor is He finished with this world**. He is about saving people, 1 by one, & **He is both able & has the right to do this**, because He is without sin, yet became sin for you & me, that we might become the righteousness of God, through Him. So, in Jesus’ Name we ask that He will continue to redeem a world badly out of whack. And in Jesus’ Name we ask Him to grow each of our hearts to be like His so that others will also desire to know Him. In Jesus’ Name go this week into your mission field & live & share the good news because He has given you that authority & privilege & joy & command—go & make disciples in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit!