



Living Lent | March 14

Sniglets

Peter came and said to Jesus, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Matthew 18: 21-25 (NRSV)

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

The heart of the gospel today includes two distinctly human practices that are dangerous to our faith. The first one is spiritual amnesia and the second one is blessing comparison. Whenever I find myself suffering from spiritual amnesia and blessing comparison together, trouble isn't far behind. I was trying to think of help for

us to avoid this trouble when I remembered “Sniglets”.

You may recall that “Sniglets” are new words for new conditions. Frequently, they are a combination of different words which they describe. “Phonesia” means calling someone and forgetting whom you’ve called just as they answer. “Cheedle” is the residue left on our fingers after we’ve eaten Cheetos.

So what might a “Sniglet” be for the deadly combination of spiritual amnesia and blessing comparison?

Let’s begin with describing the first one

I don’t know about you, but I want to snicker at Peter’s legalism when he inquires about the limits of God’s grace. With the benefit of The Resurrection and 2000 years of Christian forgiveness on my side, I chuckle at Peter’s desire to turn Grace and Mercy into a commodity while conveniently forgetting the neighbor who plays his music too loud. Even in the light of the resurrection and for a far smaller offense, I am prone to harbor anger and resentment toward them without a second thought. It is simple spiritual amnesia whenever I forget that Grace extended to me is the same Grace extended to my music-loving neighbor.

Blessing comparison is equally challenging. Mark Twain said, “Comparison is the death of joy.” The English ship’s captain didn’t write, “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like THEE.” The wage earner was perfectly happy with the deal he struck with the landowner...until the landowner made the same deal for what he perceived as LESS WORK from others.

Likewise, I love my new car until I see my neighbor gets a nicer one. I appreciate my condo until my best friend buys a house. You get the picture. “Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like ME!”

Blessing comparison is deadly because it tries to make Grace, earned. In both cases, Grace can’t be a commodity and it most certainly can’t be earned. In my life, one antidote for spiritual amnesia and blessing comparison is simple. Gratitude. I have found that it is impossible to be self-centered or resentful if I’m grateful. This points me back to a potential Sniglet and my prayer for you. Lord keep us all from being “blessnesiacs.”

Maybe you’ve got a better Sniglet? Please send them my way.

Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ

The Reverend Alan Akridge is the Rector at Saint Mark’s Episcopal Church in downtown Brunswick, where he has served faithfully, leading the congregation in service as the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in Glynn County and beyond. The close attention to care for the Children of Morningstar through the congregation, clergy, staff, and vestry has remained strong and solid. Saint Mark’s continues to be a shiny example of putting others before themselves in financial and personal support for the Children. One of the members of the Saint Mark’s staff serve as a mainstay for on-campus “Church” for the Children and

it is not unusual to see the Children of Morningstar enjoying a physical presence at Saint Mark's as well.

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