

Living Lent | Friday, March 22

Bill Barrow – Sea Island Chaplain

Fire in Our Bones

Today's Reading: Jeremiah 20:7-13

O Lord, you have deceived me, and I was deceived; you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day; everyone mocks me. For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, "Violence and destruction!" For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak anymore in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.

Jeremiah 20:7-9 ESV

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

As early as April 1933, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was publicly resisting the racist and unjust policies of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi) and would eventually conspire to attempt to bring it down. Authoring an essay against the Nazi persecution of Jews and refusing a parish post Pastor Bonhoeffer placed a "flag" in the ground to stand up to this evil while giving hope and dignity to the persecuted. His stand against evil and for the truth of God's Word brought him persecution and death but he knew in whom he believed and that was all that really mattered to Bonhoeffer.

We see a comparable situation in this passage as Jeremiah is in despair and persecuted for proclaiming God's Word. Yet, if he withholds the very words of God, he finds that "his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot." Though not persecuted in America like Jeremiah or Bonhoeffer we too can come across situations where we are dissuaded to not talk about the Lord or share our faith. So, how do we respond? Do we respond with "fire shut up in our bones" or do we slink back into a safe space and not cause any trouble? Do we trust in the Lord in all matters or just in the ones we feel quite sure we can get out of with or without his help? The

Bible says to trust in the Lord will all our heart and lean not to our understanding.

The gospel is the greatest message in the history of the world. It is the only way people can have their sins forgiven and inherit eternal life so shouldn't we be like Jeremiah and "have fire in our bones?" Should we not be able to contain the message in our hearts but proclaim it loudly and proudly? As Christians, we should be unashamed of the truth of God's word no matter the costs. Jeremiah and Bonhoeffer both endured persecution by the enemies of God, but it was worth it in the end. We too should be bold and courageous in our faith because in the end the only Person we will give an account to is Jesus and it will be worth it.

Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ:

Tucked into a fairytale setting under the live oaks in The Cloister Garden between the Main Building and Garden Wings, The Cloister Chapel is beautifully simple and charming, with traditional heart pine pews, and beautiful stained glass windows. Bill Barrow is based out of St. Simons Island, Georgia, United States, and works at Sea Island Company as a Chaplain.