

pray . fast . give .



Living Lent | Day 23

Repair

“The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the Lord Almighty. ‘The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares the Lord Almighty.”

Haggai 2:8-9 NIV

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

One of the gifts I count in my life is to have met and studied under the great Baptist minister turned Episcopal priest turned educator, Dr. John Claypool. In the 1960’s Dr. Claypool experienced the death of his young daughter, followed by the falling apart of his marriage, and in a day where being a Baptist minister and divorced were not compatible, the loss of his pulpit. On the other side of so much grief he wrote several books which have stood the test of time and influenced many, including me. One of those was entitled, *God, the Ingenious Alchemist*.

Alchemist, the predecessor to modern day pharmacists, would often take chemicals and substances, which by themselves may be dangerous if not deadly, but combined correctly had the ability to bring about healing and wellness. That was how Claypool came to understand God in his life. God’s ultimate power was not found in the ability to eliminate or allow us to avoid painful experiences within our life, God’s ultimate power is found in God’s ability to mix the elements of life in a way that can open possibilities of healing and redemption.

Haggai, the prophet, presents a word to the people of Israel, declaring honestly

that life for them at that present moment may not be all they hoped. All the silver and gold, however, is mine, declares God. Because of that, I, God, can do more with it than you have been able to do on your own. The house that God will build will be greater and what does Haggai mean by greater. I find it interesting that verse 9 does not describe a place where God shall lavish riches or give you strength for revenge upon your enemies, but will be a place where you are granted peace.

This day may you and I give over to God all our silver and gold, our strengths and our weaknesses, our joys and our pains, asking God to do something with all of it beyond what we could imagine. To build a house in which we can be repaired, healed, and find peace. May you experience God not as a supernatural being protecting you from all bad, but as the ingenious alchemist mixing the many people and situations of your life together in a way that provides strength and healing.

Challenge to Prayer and the Exercise of the Privilege of Generosity

As you pray and sacrifice through fasting throughout this Lenten Journey, will you take this opportunity to pay forward in generosity a gift of at least \$1 per day throughout the 40 days for the Children of Morningstar? It is a privilege and a blessing to give as we all look forward to Easter and the Resurrection.

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Contributor

Rev. Dr. Tony Lankford, currently St. Simons Island, Georgia, will soon began his tenure as Executive Pastor of First Baptist Church of Gainesville, Georgia, having served over five years as the Pastor of the St. Simons Island First Baptist Church. Dr. Lankford and his congregation at First Baptist SSI has been involved in the Ministry to the Children of Morningstar for many years, supporting them especially at Christmas with an a trip to the Island and a feast to celebrate Jesus' birth.

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Primary Mailing Address
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Brunswick, GA 31521

Brunswick Counseling Center
220 Santo Domingo Drive
Brunswick, GA 31525

Perry Counseling Center
402 Courtney Hodges Blvd, Ste 201
Perry, GA 31069

Morningstar Residential Campus
1 Youth Estate Drive
Brunswick, GA 31525

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