

pray . fast . give .



Living Lent | Day 5

Living Lent

“About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.”

Luke 9: 28-29 MSG

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

It was the second anniversary of my husband Ivan’s death, and I decided that my 10 year old daughter, Sarah, and I would take a journey on a Pack Trip into the Grand Teton National Park. Since Sarah was growing into quite the equestrian and I was determined not to let turning 50 make me any less agile than any other Mother of a 10 year old, the adventure sounded perfect.

I could not have anticipated what would occur during that four days and three nights. It was the trip of a lifetime. We were accompanied by two guides and a cook. At 5:30 a.m., we mounted the horses that would become our own for the duration of the trip. Together, Sarah and I began a journey into parts unknown.

The scenery was breathtaking. We traveled six and one half hours by horseback, along with 17 mules carrying the supplies that we would need for our stay. I cannot embellish the trip: words cannot describe the scenery, the solitude, the wildlife, the simplicity of existence, the bucket list opportunity of finally being able to fly fish, the time to enjoy my daughter and bond with her without the distraction of other people, electronics, and the uninterrupted communication with her and God.

During that trip, one of the most intriguing things that I discovered was the mule! A mule possesses the even temper, patience, endurance, and sure-footedness of the donkey, and the vigor, strength, and courage of the horse. Cowboys and Ranch hands alike generally find mules preferable to horses so I am told: mules show more patience under the pressure of heavy weights, and their skin is harder and less sensitive than that of horses, rendering them more capable of resisting sun and rain. Their hooves are harder than those of the horse, and they show a natural resistance to disease and insects. They carried the weight of tents and cooking utensils, food and clothing for us for that distance. As soon as we unpacked and set camp the mules were allowed to rest, graze, and simply be. And then every time we would leave camp and venture out of the meadow area, even for just a few hours or a short day trip the mules would try to follow us. They were stubborn and persistent in coming along with us even on these brief excursions. They did not want to stand around and eat all day for days on end—they were accustomed to working and being productive and belonging. I thought about the characteristics of the mule—even tempered, patient, enduring, sure-footed, vigorous, strong, and courageous.

Jesus took the disciples up the Mount of Transfiguration to teach them the characteristics of even-temperedness, patience, endurance, sure-footedness, vigorousness, strength, and courage—all qualities that would be required as they came off that mountain and began their journeys in a world that was about to be shattered by the crucifixion of their Savior and Lord...but a world in desperate need of a Savior and a world that needed and had to hear the story of the days that followed the Resurrection.

As we take this Journey of Living Lent together over the next few weeks, let us take time to examine ourselves and our commitment to the individualities taught by the mule. Let us take the time to pray for the Children of Morningstar, sacrifice or practice fasting during this time to bring our attention to the needs of others that we might be able to fill, and give. And give generously. Let us ask ourselves if we have the characteristics of the mule--are we even-tempered, patient, enduring, sure-footed, vigorous, strong, courageous, and able to execute with solid commitment--for others and for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? I hope that in the coming weeks leading up to the celebration of Easter, we each can be reminded of the characteristics of the mule during our Lenten Journey together, and that we can execute those attributes towards others in honor of His sacrifice for us.

Challenge to Prayer and the Exercise of the Privilege of Generosity

As you pray and sacrifice 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.

Contributor

Becky Dasher Livingston, Statesboro, Georgia, has dedicated her career working as the Chief Executive Officer for a not for profit, faith-based organization that owns and operates The Lodge at Bethany and The Cottages at Bethany, an Assisted Living and Independent Living Community of Care. Becky serves on the Foundation Council for Morningstar and seizes every opportunity possible to visit with the Children—a blessing indeed!

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