



FAITH matters

March 27, 2023

It is the season of repentance, with the intentions to do what we normally would not do. To be mindful of what we do or have done which has offended what we believe to be God's love or truth or justice. Do we often see ourselves or hear ourselves asking for forgiveness? Yet guilt can play a powerful role in our lives, a force beneath the surface of who we are, who we show ourselves to be. Years ago I read a book that I think of now and then. The book was titled "Why am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?" The first chapter of the book answers the question. "Because if I told you who I am, you may not like who I am, and that is all I have."

That is why we try so hard to be liked, to be appreciated, to be successful. The restlessness comes from our fears of failing to be liked (enough), to be appreciated (enough), to be successful (enough). Life so easily and quickly can throw us a curve. Our human frailty causes us to lose our balance, to fall from the pedestal we have erected, to do something stupid. We may not wear sack cloths and ashes, or whisper the words, "be merciful to me, O Lord, for I have sinned," but there is that lingering feeling that for one reason or another, we have not been good enough. Sometimes we have hurt other people in word or deed, but it is difficult to say, "I'm sorry. Forgive me." To seek forgiveness becomes the admission that we have done something wrong.

The Lenten walk takes us to the foot of the cross. The apostle Paul writes so much about our sin and the cross and forgiveness. The affirmation that claims "Jesus died for our sins" is a mysterious truth that confronts us all. In the Corinthian lesson, Paul observes that God "made him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin..." We may ponder what that is all about, but there is something in that understanding which reveals Christ to be one who knows who we are and what we are and we don't have to pretend, just be honest. So Lent is about our being honest to God, trusting that who we are is acceptable and loved by God. We don't need to be afraid to tell God who we are.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, Father and Mother God, we are your children, and we struggle to be the

persons we intend to be. We have not always used our gifts for good purposes. We judge others we believe you call us to love. We can be selfish, and resent what love requires of us in our life together. In this season of Lent, remind us of our need for your mercy. Help us to be what we intend to be, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

~Written by Rev. Bob McQuilkin



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