



PEACE IN THE VALLEY: The Valley of Rejection

Luke 4:14-30

March 2 - 8, 2008

In Life of the Beloved Henri Nouwen says that people can have false identities. We allow ourselves to be defined by what we do [our profession]; what others say about us [praise or rejection] and by what we have [possessions]. Our true identify is in Christ. We are the beloved sons and daughters of God.

Sunday, March 2: Jesus' rejection in his home town, by authorities, and by people offended at his teaching was 'worldly' rejection. Although there were times when Jesus wept, was angry and cried out in anguish, his feelings did not interfere with his mission. He remained 'true' to his identity. How do you experience your identity as a beloved child of God in times of distress and rejection? How might you be 'true' to that identity?

Monday, March 3: Jesus focused on his relationship with God. Nouwen speaks of God's love as the 'first love', the only love which is whole and complete. Although other loves are real, they will always 'fall short' and be incomplete. Only in God's first love was Jesus made whole. How would you describe the love you receive from other people? How do you understand God's love for you?

Tuesday, March 4: Remaining 'oneself' in right relationship with God is not easy. It requires prayerful submission each day. Humility says that we are not what the world says of us; 'good, bad, or indifferent'. Humility says that we are in alignment with God's design, purpose and will for our lives. Today give yourself over to what God has in mind. Begin by asking to know God's will and purpose for the day.

Wednesday, March 5: Alignment with God's plans can be refreshed in our experience of Communion. For John Wesley 'proper preparation' for Holy Communion began on Thursday evening by meditating on the Passion of Christ. Thinking back over the time since your last communion, write a prayer of confession. Be specific in talking with God. Ask to be forgiven. With God's help, consider ways to change your behavior. Receive God's forgiveness.

Thursday, March 6: Fasting is intended to focus our attention on God through sacrifice or 'giving-up'. Consider fasting from solid food for one meal. For this meal God is the food of life. Following Wesley's practice, remember Holy Friday. Meditate on the Crucifixion, Jesus' sacrifice for our redemption.

Friday, March 7: Traditionally, a 'vigil'[watchful waiting] was held during the cycle of Passion remembrance. The world was in darkness, awaiting for the return of the Light of Christ. As evening comes, light a candle. What light does Christ restore in your life?

Saturday, March 8: Each Sunday is considered a celebration of the Resurrection. It is a day of the Great Thanksgiving! In prayer express your gratitude to God for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Be mindful of Christ's presence with you. How might you use Wesley's preparation for Holy Communion as a way to prepare for worship each Sunday?