

SERMON - THE 3RD SUNDAY OF LENT - 15 MARCH 2009
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

Ephes. 5:1-2 (KJV)

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; ²And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

This morning let's talk about being followers of God and walking in love, in the love of Christ.

Lent is no more than a journey. A journey from the reminder on Ash Wednesday of our mortality, *O Man. Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return*, to the glorious reminder of our own resurrection on Easter Sunday as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Life is also a journey. A journey from our birth in Original Sin, through our Baptism and Confirmation through our own Good Friday to our own Resurrection.

To walk this journey we must be followers of God or else we will get lost and stray off into the wilderness, the wilderness where we may never be able to find our way back from.

During these forty days of Lent we should begin to develop better "trail" habits. As a hiker becomes more experienced and "trail-savvy" he or she will develop certain habits from that experience that will make the hike more comfortable and safer. Just like an actual hiker, we Christians as we become more experienced will develop better habits on our life journey.

As a hiker looks for certain danger signs, we Christian pilgrims should begin to look for those things in our lives that are dangerous to our journey, dangerous to our attaining our goal of eternal life with God.

In this life journey or pilgrimage that all of us here are on, we should have begun to realize that we cannot make this journey alone. We have to make it under the guidance and direction of God and we have to make it in the company of each other, the Church.

We also have to begin to both love and fear our guide. To quote Saint Benedict for the umpteenth time, *Live in fear of judgment day and have a great horror of Hell.*

And to quote the Psalmist ***Psalm 111:10 (KJV)*** *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.*

Today, Paul reminds us to *walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*

We have to both love and fear God as it is so well said in the Family Morning Prayers on page 588 in the Prayer Book. *Imprint upon our hearts such a dread of thy judgments, and such a grateful sense of thy goodness to us, as may make us both afraid and ashamed to offend thee.*

And it continues on to say, *And, above all, keep in our minds a lively remembrance of that great day, in which we must give a strict account of our thoughts, words, and actions to him whom thou hast appointed the Judge of quick and dead, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Remember those words of Saint Benedict, *Live in fear of judgment day and have a great horror of Hell.*

We should, all of us, do this walk in the light of the love of God but we should also realize the consequences of not observing His guidelines. Just as a hiker realizes that there will be consequences of not following the instructions from the guide, often with fatal results, we have to listen and to follow God's guidance to keep from suffering the

results, also often fatal, eternally fatal, of our own defiance.

Lent gives us, again, another opportunity to develop good pilgrimage habits, to keep us out of the Valley of Humiliation or the By-Path Meadow on our own Pilgrims Progress.

We still have time to do a good self-evaluation and identify those same tacky sins we live with year after year and get rid of them, but we never know how much time we have.

Think about it.

Amen.