

**Daily Reflection on Scripture**  
**Week of February 26**  
**Parables Part 7 –**  
**The Story Jesus and Solomon's Porch**



**Sunday, February 26, 2017**

*John 10:22-23 They were celebrating Hanukkah just then in Jerusalem. It was winter. Jesus was strolling in the Temple across Solomon's Porch.*

**Scripture Reflection:** This short verse says volumes about Jesus. Solomon's Porch, located outside the Temple was where the non-religious, the hurting and the ostracized met regularly. It is there that we find Jesus. As far as we know Jesus never went into the most holy of holies in the Temple. He spent most of his time with those who were marginalized. If this is where Jesus met people most often, then what does that say about the places we are called to be God's unconditional love to and for others?

**Sacred Pause:** John Wesley said, "The world is my parish". Look around you and see the people that God calls you to love in the same way God loves you.

**Monday, February 27, 2017**

*Acts 5:12 Through the work of the apostles, many God-signs were set up among the people, many wonderful things done. They all met regularly and in remarkable harmony on the Temple porch named after Solomon.*

**Scripture Reflection:** Following in the way of Jesus the earliest Christians gathered in the same place (Solomon's Porch) where Jesus laughed, healed, cried with, helped and taught those who were not welcomed by the religious system in their day. That's the model for church today. A church building, like the Temple in Jesus' day, is a sacred place, but no more sacred than the ground and the community around it. Jesus saw the porch outside the Temple as his place to offer an unlimited welcome to everyone. Can you see your house/apartment and yard as a sacred place to meet with neighbors to break bread and offer them an unlimited welcome, regardless?

**Sacred Pause:** Wherever you are you are on holy ground. Everyone's story is sacred. There are no insiders or outsiders. We are all one with God.

**Tuesday, February 28, 2017**

*Luke 15:1-2 ...a lot of men and women of doubtful reputation were hanging around Jesus, listening intently. The Pharisees and religious scholars were not pleased, not at all pleased. They growled, "He takes in sinners and eats meals with them, treating them like old friends."*

**Scripture Reflection:** Often when Jesus wasn't meeting with people on Solomon's Porch outside the Temple he was sharing a meal with them. He didn't care who it was; for he saw all people as part of God's family. Even those whom the religious leaders called "sinners" Jesus called his friends. He treated them like his own brothers or sisters. Everyone wants to be welcomed and loved. As followers of Jesus we too are to see those whom others scorn as our friends and treat them as brothers and sisters. This is how the world changes one person at a time.

**Sacred Pause:** See everyone you meet as your friend. Smile. Make people feel welcomed. Be God's unconditional love with skin on. Watch change happen.

### **Ash Wednesday - March 1, 2017**

*Genesis 3:19 By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, And to dust you shall return.*

**Scripture Reflection:** Today is the first day of Lent. For forty days we move toward Easter. Lent begins with the sober and most humbling reminder that our physical bodies are made of dust and one day we will return to dust. Yet on the other end of Lent we are reminded that resurrection has the last word. Not only when our tired bodies give way to death but every day as we die to the temptations of power, prestige and privilege. Those things cannot give us life. They make us feel good for a little while but like dust they soon crumble to nothing. In this regard Lent is our gift to be reminded that it is through death that we are born again and again to new life. That is why we need not be afraid to be marked with ashes. For very soon we will shout and sing Hallelujah on Easter. For death is swallowed up in victory.

**Sacred Pause:** To dust and ashes you will return. But Easter's hope can rise from ashes today. Through the death of little things, we are born again and again.

### **Thursday, March 2, 2017**

*Matthew 4:1-4 Jesus was taken into the wild by the Spirit for the Test. The Devil was ready to give it. Jesus prepared for the Test by fasting forty days and forty nights. That left him, of course, in a state of extreme hunger, which the Devil took advantage of in the first test: "Since you are God's Son, speak the word that will turn these stones into loaves of bread." Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: "It takes more than bread to stay alive. It takes a steady stream of words from God's mouth."*

**Scripture Reflection:** In many ways Lent is about going into the wilderness of our souls to face our shadow, our fears and our temptations. Truly it is an invitation to journey inward. Even Jesus had to go into the wilderness to face his own fears, shadow and temptations. Why do we think we can avoid facing them if Jesus could not? What Jesus reveals is that it is in the wilderness of life, times of grief, fear, loneliness, and not knowing where we are, that we are given a unique opportunity to meet God in those places. And when we recognize God's mercy and compassion there, we are changed forever. Just knowing this to be true in our heads without experiencing it in our lives is not enough. Perhaps that is why we are all invited to go into the wilderness of our own souls; to journey inward to experience the depths of God's love.

**Sacred Pause:** Lent is about going into the wilderness of our soul to face our shadow, fears and temptations. When we meet God there we are changed forever.

### **Friday, March 3, 2017**

*Matthew 4:5-7 For the second test the Devil took him to the Holy City. He sat him on top of the Temple and said, "Since you are God's Son, jump." The Devil goaded him by quoting Psalm 91: "He has placed you in the care of angels. They will catch you so that you won't so much as stub your toe on a stone." Jesus countered with another citation from Deuteronomy: "Don't you dare test the Lord your God."*

**Scripture Reflection:** Jesus shows us that temptations come repeatedly. He also shows the way to overcome temptations was to remember over and over again what his center was. If God is at the center and when we keep coming back to center – to the love of God within us – then we can avoid many of the dangers and the destruction that giving into certain temptations can bring our way. You will be tempted. The way to overcome temptation is by staying centered in God's love for yourself and others.

**Sacred Pause:** By centering ourselves in God's unconditional love for self and others we can overcome the hurtful and destructive temptations.

### **Saturday, March 4, 2017**

*Matthew 4:8-10 For the third test, the Devil took him to the peak of a huge mountain. He gestured expansively, pointing out all the earth's kingdoms, how glorious they all were. Then he said, "They're yours—lock, stock, and barrel. Just go down on your knees and worship me, and they're yours." Jesus' refusal was curt: "Beat it, Satan!" He backed his rebuke with a third quotation from Deuteronomy: "Worship the Lord your God, and only*

*him. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness.”*

**Scripture Reflection:** Who wouldn't be tempted to give into such a deal as was presented to Jesus? Power and possessions are great temptations for almost everyone. The only ones for whom it may not be a temptation any longer are those who have been there and found out how unfulfilling they can be. This is not to say that power and possessions are bad in themselves; but when we make them our goal, hoping they will make us most happy, that is when we find out our heart is not aligned with the ways of God as seen in Jesus.

**Sacred Pause:** When we make power and possessions our goal in life, that's when we realize our heart is not aligned with the ways of God as seen in Jesus.