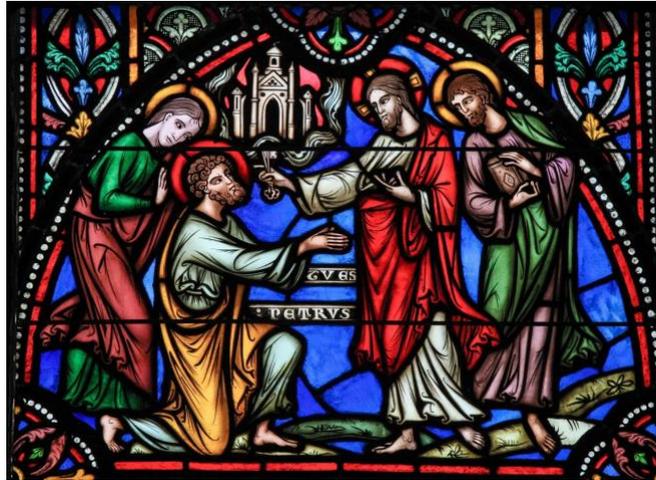


Sunday 25th February 2024

The Second Sunday of Lent



Today's Gospel reading: Mark 8: 31-38

Then Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

Last week, we began the season of Lent and heard about Jesus in the wilderness, being tempted to make wrong choices about his ministry. This week, we learn an important lesson about how to deal with temptation in our own lives.

At a place called Caesarea Philippi, which was full of temples and idols to various gods from different cults, Jesus had asked his disciples a very important question about who they thought he was. Peter's response had been spot on – "You are the Christ."

This hadn't got quite the response Peter might have expected, because Jesus went on to tell his disciples that he would suffer, be rejected and killed. Peter wasn't happy and let Jesus know this, but Jesus saw Peter's words as yet another temptation to take an easier route in his ministry – to be popular, a celebrity, a miracle-worker. Peter was trying to make Jesus do something that wasn't in his plan, so Jesus reminded him that he was thinking too much about "human things" and not enough about "divine things."

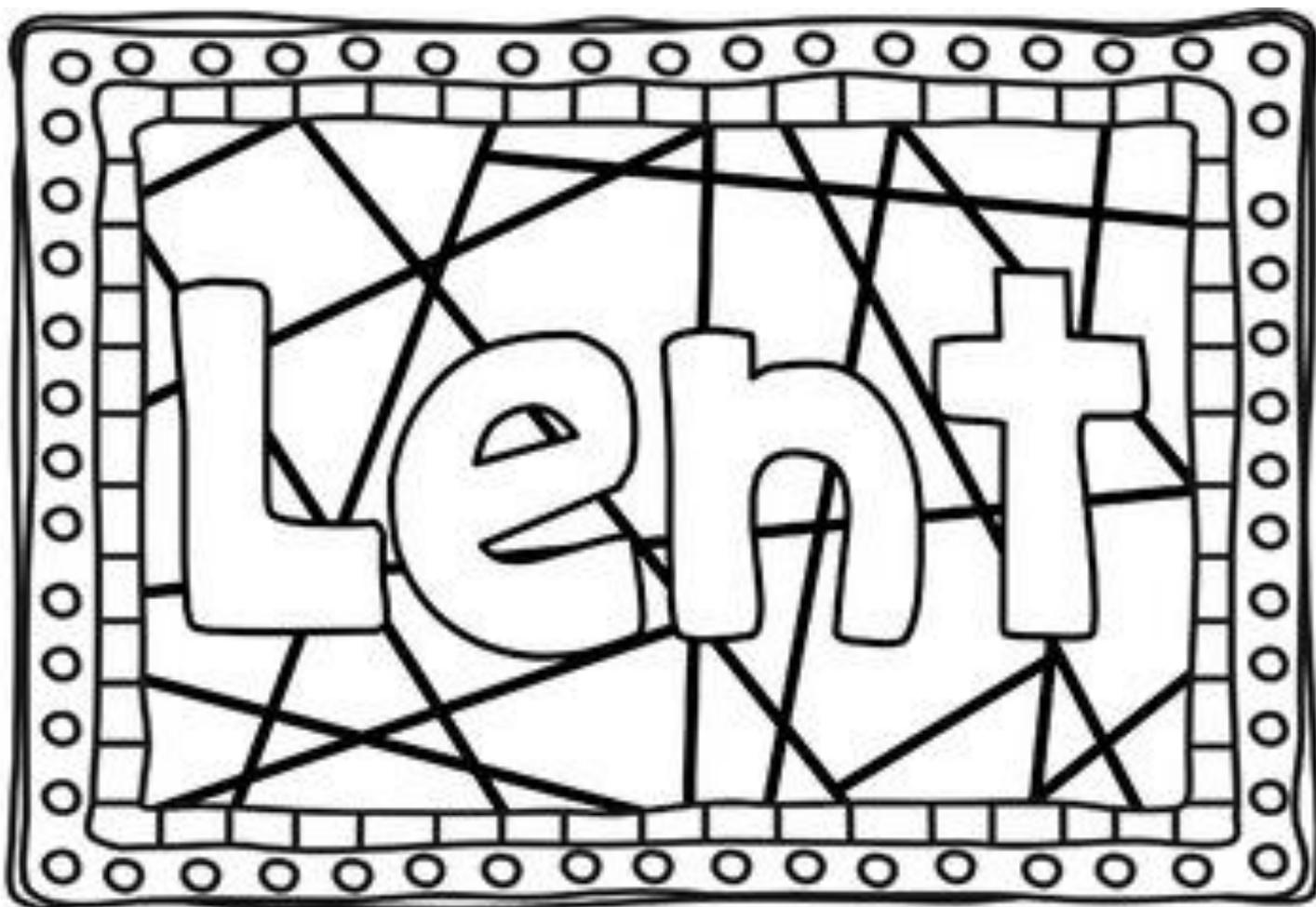
Now, there's a good test for all of us!

We are constantly challenged to choose between what is of God and what is of our own ego. When we are tempted by such a choice, we can always ask ourselves, "What would God want us to do?" It usually works!



A prayer for this week:

Father God, sometimes we are faced with such difficult choices. Help us to make decisions based on the things of eternity, rather than human concerns, and to do what you want us to do. Amen.



Take Up Your Cross

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Mark 8:34b (NIV)

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.



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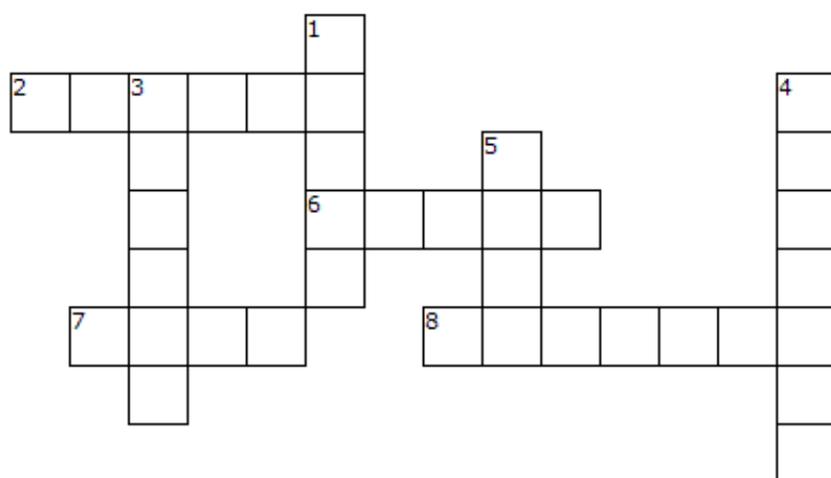
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3. 13-21-22-16 _____
4. 4-23-3-2-10 _____
5. 13-18-26-26-16-3 _____
6. 2-17-26-16 _____
7. 13-23-18-2 _____
8. 11-21-17-25 _____
9. 1-21-9-16 _____
10. 7-17-6-13-16-2-26 _____
11. 1-16-21-5-7 _____
12. 5-3-23-13-13 _____
13. 26-23-2-2-23-4 _____
14. 2-23-13-16 _____
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|---------|-------|--------|-------|---------|
| SAVE | TAKE | SOUL | DENY | HIMSELF |
| WORLD | CROSS | FOLLOW | JESUS | LOSE |
| FORFEIT | GAIN | TEACH | LIFE | SUFFER |

Take Up Your Cross

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Mark 8:34b (NIV)

Based on Mark 8:27-38



ACROSS

2. To experience injury, pain, or death
6. The evil enemy of God; the leader of the fallen angels
7. The spiritual part of a person which exists after death
8. The expected savior of the world

DOWN

1. The object upon which Jesus was crucified
3. To take someone as our leader or model
4. A person who speaks for God
5. To keep something from harm or loss

| | | | |
|---------|---------|--------|-------|
| SUFFER | SATAN | SOUL | CROSS |
| MESSIAH | PROPHET | FOLLOW | SAVE |