Lent 1 A

# MDP of God

A small boy is sent to bed by his father...[Five minutes later] "Da-ad..." "What?" "I'm thirsty. Can you bring me a drink of water?" "No. You had your chance. Lights out." [Five minutes later] "Da-aaaad..." "WHAT?" "I'm THIRSTY...Can I have a drink of water??" "I told you NO! If you ask again I'll have to spank you!!" [Five minutes later] "Daaaa-aaaAAAAD..." "WHAT??!!" "When you come in to spank me, can you bring me a drink of water?"

My dear people —**we all thirst**—for water—for things—for pleasure- for companionship

*But the greatest thirst within us is for God*—whether we recognize that or not---because God made us with a God size hole in us that only He can fill

But we often try to fill that deepest thirst with things other than God—*they’ll never satisfy us*—they might give us temporary relief—but often, especially if we try to fill that thirst with sin---**we’ll in the long run feel more desire**—more unsettled—more in turmoil than before we tried to satisfy the thirst

Several years ago there was a movie out that was called “Bedazzled”

One of the stars was a beautiful British actress by the name of Elisabeth Hurley – she played the devil

And I thought the casting was brilliant

Because one of Satan’s biggest strategies as he tries to lead us away from the Lord is to try to make sin look attractive

The Devil tries to convince us that sin will make us happy—sin will satisfy us—sin will give us a sense of joy—that’s a big lie—*but we often fall for it*

That’s precisely what Satan did with our 1st parents- he comes to them in the garden and says to Eve, “Did God really tell you not to eat of any of the trees in the garden?”

And Eve says, “Oh no, we can eat of any of the trees in the garden *except for this one* – **if we eat of that we will die”**

And the devil says, “you won’t die!” He says, “*if you eat that fruit you’ll become like gods- you’ll know the difference between good and evil*”

Satan basically says, “God is trying to limit you. – God is trying to keep you from being all that you can be. – God is trying to keep you from fulfillment.”--- He’s basically saying, “**You can’t trust God** – God doesn’t have your best interest at heart – He’s trying to keep you from being all you can be- you’ll be so much better off ignoring God and His commands”

*Now that’s not all that’s going on here* – but that’s what I want to focus on today- **the devil’s strategy of telling us we can’t trust God** – we’d be better off ignoring His commandments- that God’s ways are keeping us from finding fulfillment”

*Because that’s the same strategy he uses with us*

I can’t tell you the number of times I’ve said to people, “So, you behaving yourself?” – And its not unusual to get the response- “Oh, that’s no fun father.”

Now most of the people saying that to me are joking [maybe half joking] – because there really is a predominant feeling in our culture that God’s ways are no fun – limiting us- //// that the people who are the biggest sinners are having the best time in life

When our 1st parents believed that lie of Satan they plunged the world into darkness- and my friends a lot of people today continue to live in darkness

One of the truths of our faith is that we have a fallen human nature- what St Augustine called concupiscence--- **we’ve all felt that** *– it’s the downward pulling in our lives* – our wills are weakened

How many times do people say, “I’m going to lose weight- and they don’t ---- I’m going to quit smoking – and they don’t – I’m going to start exercising- and they don’t – I’m going to cut to cut down on the cookies – and they don’t

That’s because our wills are weakened – as St Paul says in Romans - -“ I don’t do the things I want to do – I do the things I hate”

**We have weakened wills**

We have darkened intellects – we’re just not as smart as we would have been – if we hadn’t been tainted by sin

*And we have disordered passions* – **our passion for power** – our passion for possessions – our passion for food – our passion for sex- our passion for alcohol---- *our passions are disordered*

And *the bible tells us that true freedom comes when we can control our passions-* when we conform our will to the Will of God – and then we bring our passions under the control of our will

*But our culture tells us*, that true freedom comes when we let our passions control us – when we act on our passions and desires – **then we’ll be happy** – *then we’ll be fulfilled – then we’ll really be living it up”*

**That’s a lie right from the pit of hell**

An alcoholic isn’t free when he’s or she is spending their paycheck at the bar- a drug addict isn’t free when he or she is pumping drugs into their veins

A shopoholic isn’t free when they buy something else they don’t need adding to their family debt----*Their not free* ---**their slaves**

One of my favorite authors – Peter Kreeft points out that “a ballet dancer becomes free to make beautiful moves only by conforming herself to laws and principals in disciplined practice. A scholar becomes free from ignorance only by conforming to truth-- *To data, to facts*”

In the same way we only become truly free when we recognize that God’s ways are the best ways and conform our wills to His

My friends – there is a lie that abounds in our culture – *a lie right from the pit of hell* – the same lie that ensnared our 1st parents – **the lie that says God doesn’t want what’s best for us** – that God’s ways are limiting us – that God doesn’t want us to be all that we can be

In this season of lent *we’re called to renew our minds*

Ask yourself – do I believe the lie? Do I believe that God’s commands limit me and keep me from having fun? Do I believe that sinning is a much more fulfilling way of life then the life of holiness?

*Many people believe those lies today*- **Even many Christians who are obedient to the Lord**

There are people who obey God but who are resentful of His rules [that was the problem of the Pharisees]

They felt they were being cheated – that they were missing out- that they were being limited

Lent isn’t just about repenting over the times we haven’t kept the rules

*Lent is about renewing our minds* -**It’s about rejecting the lie**

It’s about coming to trust God with all our heart even when we don’t fully understand

It’s about coming to believe with all our hearts that God’s ways – are the best ways – that His laws and commands aren’t there because mean old God wants to limit us – but coming to believe that our loving Lord is leading us along the best path – the best and only way to true joy – to true peace – to true fulfillment

And He leads us along that way because He loves us and wants us to be all that we can be

My friends we all have an incredible thirst at the very center of our lives---that thirst is for God

Nothing else can satisfy that thirst

*But Satan gives us the big lie*---he says, “**God won’t bring you joy---sin will bring you joy”**

During this season of Lent—let’s renew our minds—that’s renew our faith—let’s renew our relationship with the Lord *who is the only one who can satisfy our deepest desires*—our deepest longings—our deepest thirst!

God bless you and have a wonderful lent