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Lessons for February 2012

Lessons for February 5th, 2012 –Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

First Lesson – Isaiah 40:21-31

21 Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? **22** It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; **23** who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. **24** Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. **25** To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. **26** Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing. **27** Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"? **28** Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. **29** He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. **30** Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; **31** but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

1 Praise the LORD! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.
2 The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel.
3 He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.
4 He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.
5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.
6 The LORD lifts up the downtrodden; he casts the wicked to the ground.
7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre.
8 He covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass grow on the hills.
9 He gives to the animals their food, and to the young ravens when they cry.
10 His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner;
11 but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.
20c Praise the LORD!

Second Lesson – 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

16 If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! **17** For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. **18** What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel. **19** For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. **20** To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. **21** To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. **22** To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. **23** I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

The Gospel – Mark 1:29-39

29 As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. **30** Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. **31** He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. **32** That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. **33** And the whole city was gathered around the door. **34** And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. **35** In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. **36** And Simon and his companions hunted for him. **37** When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." **38** He answered, "**Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.**" **39** And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Lessons for February 12th, 2012 –Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

First Lesson – 2 Kings 5:1-14

1 Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favor with his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy. **2** Now the Arameans on one of their raids had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. **3** She said to her mistress, "If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." **4** So Naaman went in and told his lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said. **5** And the king of Aram said, "Go then, and I will send along a letter to the king of Israel." He went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments. **6** He brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you my servant Naaman, that you may cure him of his leprosy." **7** When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me." **8** But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel." **9** So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the entrance of Elisha's house. **10** Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean." **11** But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, "I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! **12** Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" He turned and went away in a rage. **13** But his servants approached and said to him, "Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, 'Wash, and be clean?'" **14** So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.

Psalm 30

1 I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up,
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.
2 O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.
3 O LORD, you brought up my soul from Sheol, restored me to life from among those gone
down to the Pit.
4 Sing praises to the LORD, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name.
5 For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the
night, but joy comes with the morning.
6 As for me, I said in my prosperity, "I shall never be moved."
7 By your favor, O LORD, you had established me as a strong mountain; you hid your face; I
was dismayed.

8 To you, O LORD, I cried, and to the LORD I made supplication: **9** "What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness? **10** Hear, O LORD, and be gracious to me! O LORD, be my helper!" **11** You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, **12** so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

Second Lesson – 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

24 Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. **25** Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. **26** So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; **27** but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

The Gospel – Mark 1:40-45

40 A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." **41** Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "**I do choose. Be made clean!**" **42** Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. **43** After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, **44** saying to him, "**See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.**" **45** But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

Lessons for February 19th, 2012 –(Transfiguration) – Last Sunday after Epiphany

First Lesson – 2 Kings 2:1-12

1 Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. **2** Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. **3** The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent." **4** Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here; for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. **5** The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be silent." **6** Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. **7** Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. **8** Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground. **9** When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit." **10** He responded, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not." **11** As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. **12** Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

Psalm 50:1-6

1 The mighty one, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.
2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.
3 Our God comes and does not keep silence, before him is a devouring fire, and a mighty tempest all around him.
4 He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people:
5 "Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!"
6 The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge. *Selah*

Second Lesson – 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. **4** In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the

gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. **5** For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. **6** For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel – Mark 9:2-9

2 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, **3** and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. **4** And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. **5** Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." **6** He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. **7** Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" **8** Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus. **9** As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Lessons for February 22th, 2012 – Ash Wednesday

First Lesson – Isaiah 58:1-12

1 Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. **2** Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. **3** "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. **4** Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. **5** Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? **6** Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? **7** Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? **8** Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. **9** Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, **10** if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. **11** The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. **12** Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Psalm 51:1-17

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. **2** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. **3** For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. **4** Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. **5** Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. **6** You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. **7** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. **8** Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. **9** Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. **10** Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. **11** Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. **12** Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. **13** Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. **14** Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance. **15** O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. **16** For you have no delight in

sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. **17** The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Second Lesson – 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. **21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. **1** As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. **2** For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! **3** We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, **4** but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, **5** beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; **6** by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, **7** truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; **8** in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; **9** as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; **10** as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

The Gospel – Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

1 "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. **2** "So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. **3** But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **5** "And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. **6** But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Matt 6:1-6 (NRSV) **16** "And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. **17** But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, **18** so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **19** "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; **20** but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Lessons for February 26th, 2012 – First Sunday in Lent

First Lesson – Genesis 9:8-17

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, **9** "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, **10** and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. **11** I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." **12** God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: **13** I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. **14** When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, **15** I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. **16** When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." **17** God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Psalm 25:1-10

1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
2 O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me.
3 Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.
4 Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.
5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.
6 Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.
7 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD!
8 Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
9 He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.
10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

Second Lesson – 1 Peter 3:18-22

18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, **19** in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, **20** who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. **21** And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good

conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, **22** who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

The Gospel – Mark 1:9-15

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10** And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. **11** And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." **12** And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. **13** He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. **14** Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, **15** and saying, "**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.**"