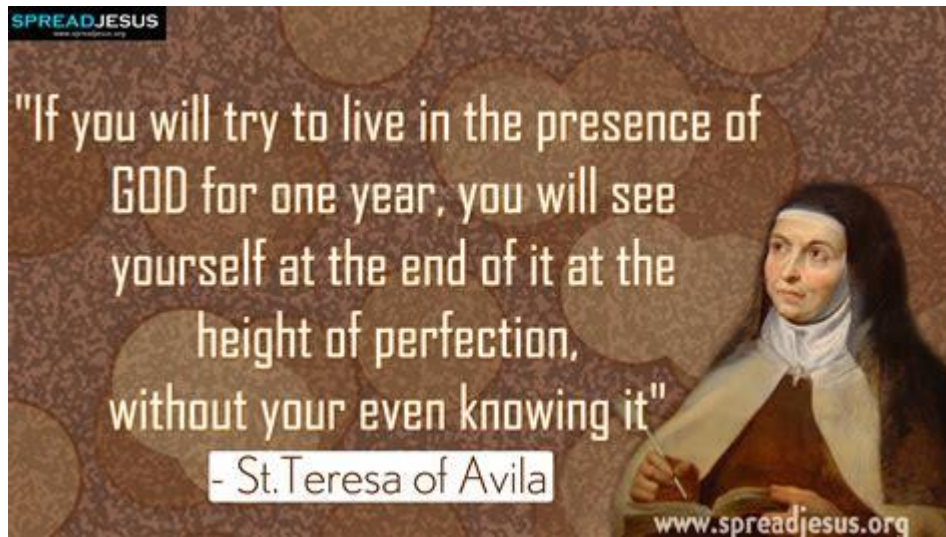


FROM FATHER JOHN: *“What we have heard and know, and what our fathers have declared to us, we will declare to the generation to come the glorious deeds of the LORD and his strength and the wonders that he wrought. He commanded the skies above and opened the doors of heaven; he rained manna upon them for food and gave them heavenly bread. Man ate the bread of angels, food he sent them in abundance. And he brought them to his holy land, to the mountains his right hand had won.” ~ Psalm 78*

The Lord gave them bread from heaven!!!



St. Irenaeus is often misquoted as writing that *“the glory of God is man fully alive”* when he actually wrote *“For the glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God.”* But, it’s still a good question to ask ourselves - what does it mean to be fully alive? Not just kind of alive, not just going through the motions of life, but really, truly fully alive?

The prophet Jeremiah begins to give us some insight into what it means to be fully alive.

*“Thus says the LORD: Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings, who seeks his strength in flesh, whose heart turns away from the LORD. He is like a barren bush in the desert that enjoys no change of season, but stands in a lava waste, a salt and empty earth. **Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD,** Whose hope is the LORD. He is like a tree planted beside the waters that stretches out its roots to the stream: it fears not the heat when it comes; its leaves stay green; in the year of drought it shows no distress, but still bears fruit.” (Jeremiah 17:5-8)*

Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, says Jeremiah. Jesus takes it further when he says to us in the Beatitudes

“Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.” (Matthew 5:1 – 12)

There is a connection between these two readings, between Jeremiah and Jesus Christ, between the Old Testament and Jesus Christ between the Jews of the Old Testament and the Christians of the New Testament. The connection is real, it's concrete and it's life-giving.

Everything in the Old Testament points to our Lord Jesus Christ and is a promise of what Christ would be when He came into the world. When we read the Old Testament we have to read it in light of the fact that the Son of God has come into the world and that the Old Testament is the foretaste, the foreshadowing of this great mystery.

Some decades ago, a college professor in Baltimore sent his students into the local slums to get the case histories of 200 boys. He instructed his students to write an evaluation of each boy's likely future prospects. In every case, they wrote words to this effect, “This boy hasn't got a chance.”

Twenty-five years later, another professor discovered the old study and decided to do a follow-up. Of the 200 boys, twenty had died or moved away. But of the remaining 180, all but four had achieved remarkable success. The professor was astonished so he asked a further question of each of the successful men: “How do you account for your success against such odds?” In each case, the man replied with words like, “There was this teacher.”

As it turned out, the teacher was still alive, so the professor sought her out and asked what magic formula she had used to pull those boys out of the slums and into success. “It's really very simple,” she said in her soft voice. “I loved those boys. I just loved them with all my heart and all my soul.”

To be fully alive means to be Christ-like. To be Christ-like is what life is all about. St. John the Evangelist tells us that God is Love. The Son of God, the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came down from heaven, was born of the Virgin Mary, took on a human nature, walked this earth, was tortured to death on the cross, died and rose on the third day.

Christ did all of this out of love, he did this because he loves you and me, he did this so you and I could have life, so that we could become fully alive. Christ loved us so much that He gave us his very life, body and soul, for us.

Everything in life comes from Christ, points to Christ and leads us back to Christ. A sickly young girl, St. Theresa of Liseaux, loved with all her heart and with all her soul A little old lady, St. Mother Theresa of Calcutta, loved with all her heart and with all her soul. A school teacher in Baltimore loved with all her heart and her soul. They changed the world because they were Christ-like, because they were fully alive.

Jesus Christ loves each and every one of us with all His heart, with all His soul, with all His being. The Beatitudes remind us to be Christ-like, to be fully alive, to love God and each other with all our hearts, with all our minds and with all our souls.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.

