

Edgar Allen Poe's classic horror story titled The Telltale Heart, tells the story of a man who kills someone, burying their body beneath the floorboards of their home to hide the evidence, and afterward, he continually hears the heartbeat of the one who was killed... Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump.

This day's Scriptures are not a horror story, but each cut to the Heart. Each emphasize, that the Law was intended to train us according to a discipline, but now as mature Christians, following GOD is a Relationship of personal decisions we are responsible for.

This week is Valentine's Day, when we act NOT according to our Requirements or Responsibilities but as driven by the HEART.

Day in day out for years, members of the Eagles and the Chiefs have trained to the point of exhaustion, running wind-sprints, practicing plays, taking hits, each have gone through the season to be the Best in their Divisions, but following the Kick-off this day, each have to work in relationship as a team, trusting others will act to support and to help one another when they need it most.

Each of the Gospels tell their version of the 33 year Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

Genesis narrates 3,500 years of human history in relation to GOD, telling all the stories of Beginnings from the Dawn of Creation, Adam & Eve, Noah; specifically as GOD made COVENANTS with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & Joseph to have future GENERATIONS, to possess a great NAME, to live in a LAND of Milk & Honey.

In contrast, the whole of the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and the first 29 Chapters of Deuteronomy have narrated what GOD did in relation to the life of Moses, setting FREE the slaves of Pharaoh to wander for 40 years in search of becoming the People of Israel, in a land Promised by God.

Here in the 30th Chapter, Moses knows he is about to die, so this is a passage about "MORTALITY." Moving to Green Valley, is a decision to choose a very different Community, Life Style, and Church.

There may be a few of us who are WORKING FULL-TIME, but most in Green Valley have retired.

There may be a few who are looking to get MARRIED, but where I used to officiate at 30 Weddings/year, we have had 3 in the last four years.

There may be those with children and Grand-Children, but it has been a long while since an INFANT BAPTISM.

More than a decision to get away from the snow, this world is different. We have had several who retired in Green Valley, then tried to live near children and grandchildren, who then chose Green Valley because simply living nearer family, did not mean we saw them any more.

This is a passage about "LEGACY." What still needs to be done? What do you want to accomplish? What do you want to be remembered for? Do we plan to leave others a world better than we received or not? What do you have on your BUCKET LIST? There was a Human Interest story on the National news this week of a woman who after her father passed, discovered his Bucket List still had over 50 things on it that he had not done, so she has made it her Bucket List to complete his Legacy. Driving a Corvette. Visiting all of the National Parks in the United States. Traveling to their ancestral Home in Europe.

But more than about MOSES himself, Moses is attempting to transfer the lifelong relationship Moses had as intermediary with GOD and with the People, for us to CREATE our relationship as Believers with GOD.

The people are encamped on the PLAINS of MOAB, out there is the River JORDAN which separates us from Moriah, the Mountain which would become the City of Jerusalem; and the whole of the Promised land, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, that we and our parents have been searching to find for generations. Fulfillment of our quest is just that close. AND YET, Moses warns: "This is the Day", entering in to take possession of the future, you cannot continue as in the past as Slaves of Pharaoh. Although it has been 40 years: SYSTEMIC ISSUES, the way we have done things before, even when harmful to us, are an easy

temptation. This is called the LAND of MILK & HONEY, because other peoples have lived there settling the land, are still living there, and it would be easy to adapt to their traditions and religions, BUT DO NOT go along with the culture. Moses describes this as a CHOICE BETWEEN LIFE & DEATH, between PROSPERITY & DESTRUCTION. So which will we choose, to seek God and listen to God which is to be one with CREATION or to turn away from God, to follow our addictions, to worship that new Car, Flatscreen, which is death?

Similarly, Jesus challenges the heart of issues. Someone asked me, "How come if the 10 Commandments say "Thou shalt not Kill" we tolerate so many murders, mass murders and war?" Instead of trying to defend the 10 Commandments, or to address the atrocities of Society we have enabled others to commit, Jesus challenges us individually to consider when we have treated one another with contempt, when we have screamed at one another "LIAR" or "FOOL" we are in danger of Hell.

So as to prevent my being a hypocrite, I would own before you here, as I have shared with some of you that in my own family, there is enmity between me and my brothers. Each faced hardship in their marriages, in their careers, in their faith, and gave up, but then encouraged the rest of us to do so in our lives; and if not, that choosing to not give up, meant you would be cut-off from them. I wish the relationships were better, and I desperately try at every birthday and holiday to reach out, to heal wounds. So far, we are not there yet. That is the heart of these passages, that issues are not as simple as are you Pro Life or Pro Choice, are you in favor of this National Policy or that Political Party, but personally, in our own lives and relationships, can we live out our decisions as COVENANTS of Faith with GOD?

Years ago, there was a televised Gameshow with Regis Philbin, called "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" which because it was television was the wrong goal, but along the way gave 3 helps.

1. Do you want to eliminate one of the many alternatives? Most likely they eliminated the most obvious and You still had a difficult choice, but the help eliminated a distraction.
2. Do you want to poll the community? Our culture, our community, may be wrong, but at least you know what others think as well.
3. Do you want to phone a Friend, to talk about your choices?

In many ways, this is the role of the Church. Not to provide a Choir, or a Building, or to alleviate Suffering through Mission, we work to provide all of those as best as we can,... But when struggling with the Heart of Issues, Cancers, Family Cut-offs, deeply Personal issues, all of which are Faith Issues of Mortality, Legacy, RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

- We can help narrow the most extreme alternatives,...
- We can share collective wisdom from a wide spectrum of experience; We may be wrong but I have never known Church-folk to not have an opinion...
- When you most need, we will be there when you call, we will listen and stand beside you.

The difficulty in that Gameshow, and in Life, is that ultimately, after narrowing the alternatives, after receiving shared wisdom, knowing we are heard and we are not alone in our decisions, we are asked for FINAL ANSWER?

See, I set before you This Day: Life & Prosperity or Death & Destruction...

This day I call Heaven and Earth to act as Witnesses against us, for what we choose. Will you choose Life or Death, Blessings or Curses?

For the Lord is your Life, who will give you an abundance of years in a land of milk & honey as God swore to our ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob before us.

This is the Day the LORD has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.