

## **We Have a Destiny**

In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

I visited Halo Lumber Mill this week, located near Pitt Meadows, on the Fraser River. There I was fascinated to watch the logs being processed, and then pulled up the chain ladder into the Mill. First the Bark was removed and sent to the refuse pile to be burned. Then the bare log was sent on to the Sawyer.

The Sawyer carefully chose the best sides, cutting out the rot

- removed planks of the best lumber, then piled to await shipment
- sent squared heartwood on to the Pony Saw
- sent the rotted or split wood on to the refuse pile to be burned

The Grader graded the planks, selecting the best, watching especially for clear lumber, and sent them on to be sawn into the best sizes to be made into doors and door frames. Others he rejected, sending some back to the saws to be cut again, to find some lesser grades of wood in them, to be made into window frames

- some were rejected and sent to the refuse pile to be chipped

At best, about 47% of a tree is used, while 53% is chipped or burned

- some trees better, some worse, none were perfect.
- some trees rejected all together; Example of a log that looked good on the outside, but inside was completely hollow and rotten.
- all trees had some rot, some splits, some knots.

Yet, in the forest, everyone of them had stood tall and proud, spreading a crown of leaves, as if to say: "Look at me, am I not grand?"

That visit to the Lumber Mill made me think of my own Christian Life. How useful am I to our Blessed Lord Jesus?

- Jesus told us that we were to "bear fruit" for God.
- God did not plant us here just to look pretty. Am I producing "fruit" for Him? Or just an ornamental crown of leaves?

Just a few weeks ago at Easter we celebrated that Jesus died and rose for us, to redeem us. He knew we men and women are like a forest of trees, concealing rot and knots and splits within each of us—none of us, without Jesus, is acceptable to the Kingdom of God—no, not one. The forest of humanity is fit only for burning.

BUT Jesus came to redeem us, to save us, to begin the process of making us holy, fit to “bear fruit” for the Kingdom.

So He

- baptised me into His Family
- Confirmed me with His Holy Spirit
- fed me with His Blessed Sacrament of the Altar
- all for the purpose of making me “bear fruit” for Him.

When I look at myself in the mirror, I am relatively pleased with what I see on the outside— but I look at myself on the inside through God’s eyes, when I compare myself to our Blessed Saviour, I begin to see the “rot” that is in me, and the “splits”, and the “knots”. There is little “clear lumber” in me. I need His help if I am to “bear fruit” for Him.

So,

- I need to Confess my Sins that I may be forgiven and healed on the inside.
- I need to receive Communion weekly, to be filled with His Grace.
- I need to study the Scriptures so that I can learn how to live.
- I need to join with my brothers/ sisters at Church to Praise Him.
- I need to learn to be faithful to Jesus, to care for His Church better.
- I need to have the rot in my life removed, my splits and knots cut out.

There is much in me that must be cut out and rejected, so that God can create “clear lumber” out of this old priest. But that is the whole point of salvation.

I am not here in this world to be loved, to appear tall and strong to others, to be crowned with achievements. I am here to “bear fruit” for God, to build His Kingdom. And that takes His Grace, and my Work.

In the Gospel for today, Jesus says: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.”

Growing a Christian takes time, and God’s Grace and our sacrifice, allowing God to cut out the rot and the splits and the knots that each of us carries inside. I know, I know just how painful that can be, we don’t like to give up what God tells us has to go.—But if we truly want to serve Him, and to produce fruit for Him, we must expect to be pruned and pruned and pruned some more. The “Lumber Mill” of the Church is the way God is cleansing us of our sin, in order to create “beautiful clear lumber” out of our mediocre lives.

Jesus says: “I chose you to bear fruit, fruit that will abide for the Kingdom.”

That is our destiny, and in the end will be our glory. Thanks be to God.

In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.