

St. Timothy Presbyterian Church

COMMUNITY

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Sermons

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Lesson from Shephard's Image

April 26, 2015

Scripture passage unavailable

I say I am the Good Shepherd.

Jesus had tried to show us what the desired human quality was all about. Being a Good Shepherd is how we ought to live. We ought to be a good shepherd to each other. People often think, "I am the sheep and Jesus is the shepherd." That kind of motto is the understanding we have, "I am the sheep and Jesus is the shepherd." That is true. It is quite convenient to believe that model of understanding because one could think, "I don't need to be a shepherd, I could just be a sheep, a follower." But the identity that Jesus gave to us is not to just be a sheep, it is to be a shepherd. Whatever Jesus did and whatever Jesus was is also who I am and what I do. If Jesus was a shepherd, then I'm a shepherd. If Jesus was resurrected from the dead, then I resurrect from the dead. Paul said, "The resurrection happened to Jesus, but the same thing will happen to you."

So we cannot separate ourselves from Jesus because Jesus showed what humanity is all about. When he came to us, he did all these things as a human being and not as God. He was showing us what human life is supposed to be. By Jesus saying, "I'm the good shepherd," Jesus was showing us what the most desirable human quality is. In our life journey we meet many shepherds who have guided us and showed us the way. Trying to be a good shepherd is what we should all strive for. Of course we cannot make ourselves good shepherds just because we want to. Deep inside we may take a contrasting attitude because we don't want to have ownership of our spiritual life.

Even though it is difficult to be good shepherds to each other, we should always keep that noble ideal. Always think about being a good shepherd, it has to be in our mind all the time. Just because it looks too high or too difficult, let us not give up on that idea because that is what Jesus showed us. I know we are far from being good shepherds and it is really hard to be a good shepherd, but let us always keep in mind that Jesus is calling us to be a good shepherd. As I look back on my life, there were many good shepherds that have guided me in my life. My parents, especially my mom, was a good shepherd to me. Good friends

that I had, when I was lost, were good shepherds that guided me and showed me the way. Even strangers were good shepherds to me. The help that we receive make us thankful to those who have been good shepherds to us. In the same way I think we need to learn to be good shepherds to those who are in need. In our journey, there are many people who need some guidance. If we can be a good shepherd to them, how wonderful that must be.

So in today's passage Jesus says, "I'm a good shepherd" and this shows us concrete things about being a good shepherd. It shows us what is involved in being a good shepherd and Jesus teaches it to us practically and concretely in what he did. But how can you really be a good shepherd? I read the story several times and three words come to my mind: Care, intimate knowledge, and sacrifice. These three elements are essential elements of being a good shephard and supports the ideal of being a good shepherd. These three things have to be there.

Care

Everything stems from the heart of care. Care is a beautiful word. If you look at this society, you hear about care a lot. Pastoral care, terminal care, all kinds of care programs. This society is almost like it is based upon care and we are very familiar with the idea of caring for others. Sometimes in North America, when people are angry they say, "I don't care." "I don't care" is such a cruel phrase. If one doesn't care, some people will die. People need to take care of the elderly and sick. People get scared and lonely so they need to be cared for. People who are hurt need to receive care.

Thousands of people died in Nepal and if we hadn't cared, the people who were affected would have perished. Fortunately, the whole world is awakened by this tragedy so they were sent aid. That's what humanity is all about. When somebody falls, we care. When somebody's sick, we care. This most desirable human quality is to deeply care for the people around us. A caring heart has to be cultivated. Caring only comes when you put yourself in that person's shoes, but how hard it is to put myself in another person's shoes. We don't want to do that because sometimes we are lazy, or sometimes we are too obsessed with our own self, our own agenda, and our own problems. Therefore we cannot really enter into that person's shoes and know what that person is feeling, we don't

have this empathy. This world becomes more and more like that. We become so indifferent and we cannot feel for the pain of other people.

Often people who are deeply cared for say this phrase: "I feel understood", "This person understands my pain," or "This person will understand the fear that I'm going through. This person understands the agony that I'm pulling through or the pain that I'm going through. This person understands me." So from care, understanding happens.

Intimate Knowledge and Understanding

The second pillar is intimate knowledge and intimate understanding. When you care for other people, you start developing intimate knowledge or understanding about the person. But the person who doesn't care, they have no ability to understand. When you start caring for people, you start having understanding about them so you become a bigger person and have deeper understanding. That's why people who are cared for say, "I feel understood." If caring becomes a part of my life, we automatically think about how they may feel and what they may experience. As soon as they hear you, they understand what you're going through.

Sometimes I go to other churches to preach and there are a lot of elderly people there. After my sermons, the people come to hold my hand and I feel that they understood that story because they've been living by being cared for. They knew exactly what I was talking about. There's depth of understanding in caring and so listening is more important than speaking. Kay Lindahl said in her book, *Practicing The Sacred Art of Listening*, "Listening is not a passive activity. It is not about being quiet or even hearing the words. It is an action and it takes energy to listen." How difficult it is to listen. You listen with your ears but you must also listen with your heart.

Chinese people were very smart when they came up with their language. When you see the Chinese character of listening, this is how the word was made up: the left part is an ear, the right top part are eyes, and underneath at the bottom is the heart. So it's not just about ears or eyes. There has to be the heart as the bottom foundation. Listening does not happen at the ear or the eyes, listening happens at the heart level. When we truly listen to other people, we understand them and their heart so our hearts can become connected. Jesus had a

deep understanding about people because he had the heart listen to others. As soon as Jesus listened to people, he figured out everything about that person. He had incredible insight about people.

Sacrifice

Finally, the ultimate sign of being a good shepherd – sacrifice. Your care, your deep intimate knowledge, all have to be turned into sacrifice. Without sacrifice, being a good shepherd is impossible. It is the most beautiful thing that a person can do for another person. Jesus' cross is a symbol of sacrifice and Jesus did the most beautiful thing that any person can do for another person. If somebody asks you for the directions on the road, then what do you do? You have to sacrifice your time and effort and help that person. Sacrifice is part of being a good shepherd. Only when we are able to let go of our own needs for the sake of others is sacrifice possible. That's what sacrifice is, you take your needs aside and you put the other person's needs before in front of you.

I just came back from a pilgrimage through Santiago with a group of 10 people. We walked more than 35 km a day so we walked over 40 000 steps. Despite the long walk, everybody was so helpful and cooperative. If everyone had not been that way the trip would have been a disaster. It wasn't easy, but everybody pitched in to take care of each other in different ways. Everybody put others' needs before their own.

I realized that even simple prayer without sacrifice is impossible. When you do not embrace other people's sickness, suffering, pain, and hardship, you cannot help the other person. That is the sacrifice.

Before I came on the trip I had heard that somebody was sick so I decided to pray for that person for the whole day. Unfortunately the next morning I got blisters all over my feet, both right and left. Every time I took a step on the pilgrimage, I had an electric shock of pain. The next day, one of the group members who was an acupuncturist came to help me and he brought his special bandages. He took off my socks and he looked at my feet and put the bandages here and there. The next day, I was fine. When I think about this trip, I think about is the acupuncturist's teeth. He always had these white teeth smiling from the first day to the last, even when everybody was so tired at the end of the trip. When we came back to Toronto, he goes around talking about all the happy times

during the pilgrimage. That acupuncturist helped the other members as well. One person got sick and was crying and saying "Save me, save me" because she was hurting so much. Then this person did acupuncture and the girl got better. We also had a photographer among us who took beautiful photos. Everybody pitched in. Everybody put others needs before their own.

What is community if not that? Without that, the trinity is not possible. Without that, humanity will collapse. Being a good shepherd to each other is what Jesus taught us in order to build a community otherwise we will destroy humanity. These are the pillars of what the most desirable human quality is: caring, intimate and deep understanding of each other, and sacrificing. I hope that we can be good shepherds to each other. That's what a good life is all about, it's not about going on vacation, drinking, and all that. Life is good. Life is good when you could be good shepherds to each other.

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

October 4, 2015

John 15:9-15

Friends

It's wonderful to have friends, friends are beautiful gifts from God. Without friends, I don't think we could have survived in this cold and rough world. Because of friends, we could overcome our loneliness and because of friends, we had laughter and joy. In this tough life, we spend so much time with them and have so many experiences we cherish. Some of them are very crazy things to do. When we were sad, they comforted us and when we suffered, they suffered with us. When we are happy, they share the joy that we had and deep in their heart they truly were happy for us. Having friends is probably the most precious thing in the world. And because of our friends, our family, our life has been full and meaningful. So my friends, try to make as many friends as possible. There will be good for your life and if you have good friends, don't take them for granted.

Cherish them and in this community, make some new friends. Forgive one another, accept one another, understand each other and embrace one another. In doing that, slowly you will feel the friendship and then you can build the friendship. The Christian life is simple. The Christian life is nothing but being a friend to other people. You become friends with other people. That is what it means to live as a Christian. They don't have to be like me. They don't have to share my views, they don't have to have the same hobbies as me, age doesn't really matter. The race doesn't matter. We can be a friend to all kinds of people. Think about it, consider other people as your enemies and consider other people as your friends. If you see somebody and if you see that person as a stranger and as an enemy compared to if you see somebody and you take them as your friend, your life will turn out very differently. When you see other people as your enemies, you will become hostile and defensive, and I don't want to be hostile and defensive in the world. That's not the way for happiness. When you're continuously hostile and defensive to other people, you don't become happy. You don't look happy. Your face doesn't look happy when you do that. But when you take other people as friends, there's a warmth around you.

Love

No one is perfect, no one. As you get to know them, you see their weaknesses and their shortcomings. If you look at them apart from far away they look good, but when you become friends, you go closer and closer to them and then you see all the ugly things too. Shortcomings, weaknesses, you know. If you reject them because of that and turn your back against them because of their weaknesses and shortcomings, we will never be able to make friends. We'll never be friends with other people. There'll be no friends left for us. We have to learn to accept their weaknesses and embrace them. I think that's higher wisdom. You accept their weakness and their shortcomings and embrace them. I think that is higher wisdom. Less wise people will always look at negative things about other people, but smart people, the positive things and negative things they embrace. That's how they live a positive life. That's why they make so many friends.

Isn't that what love is all about? If you love somebody that is lovable what good is it? Anybody can do that. Who doesn't love Encarnacion and who doesn't love Bautista? Who doesn't Love David Price these days? Everybody loves them. Everybody loves them, right? So if you love somebody that is lovable, anybody can do it. But if you're able to love the unlovable, I think that is true love. That's what the definition of love is, love the unlovable. When Jesus loves us, I don't think Jesus sees the lovable quality within us, and that is not the reason why he loves us. I believe that Jesus sees everything inside of us, all our weaknesses, shortcomings and ugliness within us even. And yet he loves us. And often I think that that is a miracle. God loves me even though he sees all about me and he still loves me. That's a miracle. In that way, love is a miracle. That is Jesus' love. Look at how he loved Judas, knowing that he would betray him.

The most beautiful scene is the last scene, the last supper. Jesus took the bread and gave it to Judas, knowing that he would soon go out and betray him. He did not reject him. Even at the communion table, he gave the bread to the person who will betray him. That is love, that is love, allowing him to betray him. That is the kind of love Jesus showed. Today Jesus calls us as his friends. This is what he said, "I do not call you servants any longer because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my father." By saying that we are his friends. Jesus brought down all the barriers and the walls that exist

between God and us. Now he considers us as his friend. He embraced all our shortcomings and weaknesses and calls us his friend, not because we became lovable and worthy all of a sudden to be his friend. He just accepted us and loved us and considered us as his friend. I think that's a radical statement. Jesus, as God calls us as his friend,

Then Jesus told us about the greatest love and this is what he said, "no one has greater love than this to lay down one's life for one's friends." That is the ultimate love you can do for your friends, and we Christians believe that Jesus did that for us. Jesus showed how precious we are through his death. That's what love is. Love makes a person precious. When you're loved, you feel appreciated. You feel preciousness. That's what love does. When you love somebody, you make that person so precious. If you hate that person, you make that person so miserable and low, but when you love somebody, then you make that person very precious. Making somebody so special and precious, and I believe that that is love. That's why proud people or self-centered people can never love. Because no one is more precious than them, no one is more special than them. They refuse to make any other person as precious as they are so they can never love. They refused to consider others as precious. Jesus refused to call us as his friends. Now we relate to Jesus, not as a servant, but as a friend.

Rejection and Acceptance

You know, we have this fear of rejection, so we try so hard to be in. Nobody wants to be rejected. Kids who bully other kids know this fear very well, so they bully others by rejecting them, by isolating them, by excluding them. There's an expression popular among kids, "FOMO" and that is the fear of missing out. "Oh, so and so was invited to the party. How come I'm not invited? Oh, it looks like they're going somewhere to eat. How come they don't ask me to go?" That's the fear of missing out. That's why people want to be popular so that they can be accepted everywhere.

Strangely, people criticize Jesus, saying that he was a friend of sinners. He was a friend of sinners. Jesus was indeed a friend of sinners. He chose to be a friend of sinners. He chose to be a friend of the people who nobody wanted to be friends with. We should not limit our friendship to the people we like and the popular people, we should extend our friendship to those who are alone and on their own. Our life will be richer. In my ministry. I like to be a friend to the people I minister to.

Probably that was my philosophy from the beginning without realizing it. When I do visitations, they treat me like a friend and I appreciate it. Last Thursday I had dinner with an ESM couple and I feel like I met old friends and had dinner. It was a nice restaurant downtown, where only celebrities go. So I said, that's the restaurant only celebrities go to and then she said, "you're the celebrity." So we had a beautiful dinner. They are the ones who during their university time dated together and you know they came to my house because the movie was at seven o'clock and we still had 45 minutes to kill, so they just dropped by my house. So all kinds of people came to my house and then we are all friends. That's how I have done ministry. There are people who might have known me for more than 30 years here, even before I became ordained. They were there and they are still here.

Break Barriers

They are like good friends. It is important that we become friends with each other and that's what Jesus wants. Jesus said, "as I have loved you, love one another." We should break down the walls between us and restore our friendship. Many, many people live in loneliness. We all feel existential loneliness. God gave us this community and it is important that we go beyond our boundaries and build our friendships with each other. We should overcome our boundaries of cultural gap, age gap, language gap, and become friends by accepting each other. You don't have to be the same age to be friends. You don't have to have the same cultural background to be friends. You don't have to have the same financial status to be friends. Especially to those who don't have many friends in this community, we need to extend our hands, our friendship. We need to reach out. I hope that the newly elected elders exercise reaching out, extending the hands of your friendship to the people who come to our community. Instead of remaining in our little circle, we should open up our circle and go out and reach out. They can be friends you have known for a long time, but you may find a new friend too.

One of my good friends are more than 20, 30 years older than me, they are my golf buddies. Well, I've been playing golf with them for, I don't know how long, they are like my friends, the age doesn't matter. The culture doesn't matter. When we have a friendly attitude to other people, our life will change and we can expand our experiences.

A lot of times the reason we cannot make friends is that we are the problem, not them. Maybe we have too much hurt, pain or anger to have

friends, to have a friendly attitude to others. Remember, Jesus became friends with you and he wants you to reach out to others and make friends and be their friends. Make God bless you with your journey. As you make new friends all the time. Go out and make good friends in your life as Jesus was your friend. Let us sing together.

There have been many friends, who have supported us and who have been with us all our lives and now Jesus is our friend. Maybe sometimes we rejected our friends sometimes we turn our back against them because we saw their shortcomings and weaknesses. Let us pray that we may have a big heart to embrace all kinds of people as our friend.

This Christmas

December 20, 2015

Luke 1:39-55

Childbirth

Whenever I see the pantomime, as John said, it brings a tear to my eyes. And what an important message that a pantomime carries that we're living in a very broken world where we finger point at each other. We can destroy the spirit of other people and God has come to bring peace and reconciliation, but we human being continuously do that. So thank you again. And, I think it was written and the choreographed by Deb, you have a talent there and a good spirituality too. So maybe, you may think of doing it every month, make a kind of pantomime group, so every month and prepare a message and write it, and share with us.

Yesterday, I really enjoyed the Christmas concert, especially Hi-C. Wow. You guys are cool. I was so proud of you. You, you've done a really, really good job. Thank you very much. You know, Christmas time, we are celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. You know, childbirth is one of the most fascinating and miraculous things you can ever witness and experience in our lives. It is life's mystery. The life is born in a person's, in a womb, like a woman, you are blessed people that you can experience that we are witnessing to that mystery of life. I mean, the mysteries are around us. We can never take for granted the childbirth because whenever we see the birth of children, we experienced the mystery of God and the mystery of life. And today we'll baptize Emily and Yoona. And what we are doing is we are celebrating as the community for this wonderful mystery of God. I mean, these children were born with potential. These children were born for a specific reason, and God has blessed them. Otherwise, they will not have been born. God has blessed them, so they are a given birth in this world. So, we are celebrating his community, the mystery of life, mystery of God and the mystery of this community.

The Mystery of Life

Today's scripture passage, we see two women also celebrating the birth of two babies. And these two babies are very, very spiritual babies. They will change the course of history in the way that we could never imagine

in a radical way. They're both had impact, such a profound impact on humanity, on the history of this world, in the way that we can never imagine, you know. I wonder, without their messages, what will be like, this world? What would this world be like without their messages? People, I mean, this humanity will run into totally wrong direction.

And the message that these people, these two babies, proclaimed to us, continuously held, held in tension so that humanity doesn't go in the wrong direction all the way. Without these messages that the powerful always will exploit the weak and that they will take that for granted. But this message always held them in tension. And I'm really thankful for the message that these two babies to us, the birth of Jesus Christ is a birth of God's desire. Birth of Jesus Christ, his birth from God's message. That's what birth of Jesus Christ means. It was a very difficult reality for Mary, a teenager, being pregnant without marriage at that time. That was a difficult reality. What happened to Mary was what no ordinary woman would have experienced. She was an ordinary woman who experienced the extraordinary experience that no one experienced before, but it was hard to understand and hard to accept and hard to digest. But Mary saw the work of God behind this hard reality. In other words, Mary saw the mystery of God.

The mystery of life is this. Behind our harsh reality, there is a work of God. There is a reality of God in your harsh reality. If you see only harsher reality, you become harsh people, but behind this harsh reality, we see the work of God and that, I think that, is the mystery of life. I hope that we all experienced the mystery of life. Life may be difficult. Life is not easy. Life may be difficult, but behind this difficult life, there is work of God. That's why life is a mystery. How did Mary know? I don't know. That's another mystery.

How God Works

You know, when we see God working, we know who God is working. That is the mystery. Sometimes don't you experience that? Certain experience really causes "Wow. God is working". Knowing that it's a mystery. We don't know how to explain that. There was no proof that we can provide, but we know that God is working. That itself is a mystery. That's why Mary came to Elizabeth, with her relative, who also experienced that mystery of life. So she wanted to share that mystery with her relative Elizabeth. The community is people who have experienced mystery. We come together here and we share our mystery

with each other. And so Mary went to see Elizabeth. As soon as Elizabeth saw

Mary, she knew that something wonderful was happening because the baby in Elizabeth womb leapt for joy. That is a mystery. When you have children, that children give a message. You know, when my wife was pregnant, she was crazy about steaks. Every night she wanted steak. And Joshua loved steak. And the second baby, all of a sudden, Grace loves lobster and she was looking for lobster everywhere!

It's a mystery! Whatever child in that womb recognized that John, in Elizabeth womb, recognized the work of God and recognize Jesus. So Elizabeth, blessed Mary, for she was the carrier of God's mystery. This is what she said. Blessed are you among women. And blessed is the fruit of your womb. How wonderful it is to bless each other in all blessings, blessing each other means recognizing God's work being done in the person we bless. That's what blessing is. Blessing each other means recognizing God's work being done in the person you bless. For example, I bless you. Then I recognize that God is working in you. That's what we do. I think we should bless each other all the time. We should recognize that God is working wonderful things in your life. We should do that more often. Why don't you turn around and say the blessing? Just turn around and say the blessing. Yeah, let's see. Let's see.

Mary's Magnification

We should do that more often. You know? Instead of cursing each other, we bless each other, right? We should recognize God's wonderful work being done in each and every person's life. Then Mary magnified the Lord. Mary, somehow, something inspired her. It was not what she saw in reality. What she saw, in reality, was not really what she confessed right now, but she magnified the Lord. In other words, the message that was impregnated in her kind of came out of her mouth and that was God's message and this was what she said. God has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts and God has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. God has filled the hungry with good things. God has sent the rich away empty.

This is a message Mary saw when she had baby Jesus. This was what Jesus was supposed to do. It was not the reality she saw around her. Soon she would experience hundreds, thousands of innocent children

being massacred. That was her reality. It's not what she saw, but that was a message, God's message. That's what God would do in any situation. God will bring down the powerful, send away the rich empty, but God will lift up the lowly and will fill the hungry with good things. What wonderful news. It is wonderful news, but not to everyone, as John said. People who continuously exploit and punish and persecuted the innocent, to them, this message is not a wonderful message. This message is a scary message. A threatening message.

In the 1980's, the government of Guatemala, they prohibited Mary's magnification to be recited in public. By law, they prohibited that you should not recite Mary's magnification because it was too subversive to them. The message was too dangerous for them, but to us, this is good news, a wonderful message. It is a declaration that the power-hungry world is not the world that God has in mind. The power-hungry world is not the world that God wants to design. God wants to design the world where we bless each other, we encourage each other, and we build up each other. As the pantomime clearly articulated, going finger point at each other, even Hi-C among you. There are some popular people. That's a power.

Reflection

Don't exploit the unpopular people in your group. Lift them up, rather than just admiring the popular people. People who are not that popular, people who may not be that talented, lift them up. That is a message of Jesus Christ. We continuously have to lift them up, even around us, among us. There are weak and vulnerable people around us. We take care of them. And that is the message of Christmas. That is the message of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. So this time, let us celebrate the birth of these two infants and let us baptize them. That is our way of celebrating the birth of these children.

The Art of Caring

April 24, 2016

Matthew 25:31-46

Caring

As we reflected last week about the scripture, as we read in depth, they're tremendous wisdom and insights and many times we don't really read in depth and we are going to reflect on today. If you did it to one of these least ones, you did it to me. What does that mean? Caring for somebody is something we do. We all do. We all do take care of somebody. Sometimes aging parents, our children and people who need our help taking care of somebody is what we human beings do. It is a big part of our life. We cannot live without it.

At the Wednesday woman's Bible study, we are studying the spirituality of caring and last week we were talking about how important it is to care for other people and I realized that our women's group, they're doing so much in taking care of people around them, their children, their spouse, their aging and ill parents and their family members who are sick. There are so busy caregiving, I think they are doing a wonderful job in caring for other people. So they were saying all the things that they were doing. And then I asked them who takes care of you? And I saw tears, some tears in their eyes. Who takes care of you? And they said caregiving can be quite lonely sometimes and I realized that caring for someone is not just what we do. Caring is not just what you do for people, it is about building a kind of relationship where we care for each other. It's not what you do, but it is building a relationship where we care for each other in that relationship we give care, but sometimes we receive care from people, so when you take care of your children, when you give care for your children, don't just give them what they need. Don't just give care to them. You have to teach them how important it is to care for other people.

If one human being cannot learn what it means to care for others, then we don't live out good human life. So as we take care of our children, we have to teach them, that's the basic, the most basic thing that we need to teach our children before any degree. We have to teach them to care for other people.

Connection

We need to create an environment where we all learn about caring and I realized that caring is not just an act. It's not what you do. Caring is about being connected. When you take care of somebody, then you are connected deeply and intimately connected with that person. That's what caring is. Caring is not just giving them bread and give them food. Caring is about being connected with a person that you care for. Saint Paul gave us this wisdom about being a Christian. He was talking about the marks of Christians and he said this, rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

He's talking about deep connectedness. You're so connected with a person. When the person rejoices, you rejoice with them. The person is in sadness and you weep with them. That's what caring is. That's what being connected means.

Maybe we are deeply connected with a person. We can feel for that person, both joy and pain. We can be with them in their struggle.

Receiving Care

You know, we cannot always give caregivers. Sometimes we need to be care-receivers. There are times when we fall, times when we are down. There are times when we're depressed. There are times when we are really, really sad and even there are times, so maybe you're angry, nobody knows, but we are very angry. That's when we need care from other people. We cannot always give, we cannot always be caregivers, sometimes and often we have no choice but to care receivers. When I receive care from people, I found something wonderful happens. Something mysterious happens. You know what that is?

We experience the divine presence. They receive care. We experience the divine presence. The person that I talked about last week, how many you found out? She's Irene. She's getting a surgery tomorrow. She still sends me email messages every day hearing each sermon. I think she went into last years sermons now and in one email she said, Reverend Kim, you visited me 20 years ago when I was in the hospital. At that time I received a new life through many people's prayers and doctors, wisdom, and insights and all of this time I have lived with a thankful heart

for the new life I've received. Then you know, 20 years later she got the same doctor who did her surgery 20 years ago now. He became a chief of that department and at that same doctor is taking care of her and is doing the surgery, and she said, now you visited me again.

God sent me many angels, including you. Thank you, she said, I think that was her divine moment. She was able to see angels around her. As we receive care, we also receive divine presence. That was what Jesus was talking about in today's passage. Jesus said, for I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me, and the righteous said, when did I do that?

I only saw the hungry. I only saw the thirsty and the stranger and the naked and the sick and the prisoner. That's all I see. I didn't see you. You weren't there! And Jesus was saying, of course, I was there. Of course, I was there.

Caring in Life

I was writing to the heart of those who are suffering almost in the heart of those who received care from you. So when you did it to the least of these, you did it to me because I was right there in their hearts. That's what Jesus was saying. When I'm sad sometimes and somebody takes care of me by sharing my sadness, I experience Jesus right there through their caring heart. Last Wednesday I visited with Jane, a KSM member at the hospital. He is at the last stage of his life. He wasn't fully conscious. He was coming in and out of his consciousness. So I went to him and, uh, besides his bed and I said to him, this is Reverend Kim, can you recognize me? And all of a sudden his face was brightened up and he barely formed his mouth. But with his mouth, he said, thank you.

I'm sure Jesus was right there with him. Caring is not just doing mechanical action. We carry the divine presence in your care for the people who are in need. You don't even have to talk about Jesus. We carry a divine presence. Verbal articulation is not needed, in caring.

When I was in university, I was kind of, you know, very hot for Jesus. Even now I'm hot for years, but I was hot and naively, I wanted to share

about Jesus Christ. I wanted to tell them how much he loves you and all this stuff. So it was a Robart's Library. I don't know, maybe in the second year university, Roberts Library. I was in line. There was a copy machine at that time. They don't have it anymore probably, I was waiting in line and there was a girl behind me, uh, and I wanted to say something to her. So, uh, I couldn't really say that Jesus loves you and then she will look at me crazy. And so I told her, why don't you go ahead? And then she's, she was quite surprised and thank you, she said, and I said, by the way, I'm a Christian. Oh, I was so embarrassed.

You know, we don't need, we don't even have to say verbally. Our heart does not have sound, but our heart is louder than what we say with our mouth. It's not the amount of how much you do for that person, but it is the thought that counts. It is a thought that counts. It is your heart that moves them. It is your attitude. If your heart is communicated, the person will receive deep care from you because you are connected.

Jesus' Caring

You know one thing great about Jesus is that he was only a 30-year-old kid. I'm sorry, what do 30-year-olds know? He was a kid, and yet he knew exactly what was going on in people's hearts. He knew exactly what was going on in Nicodemus' heart. He knew exactly what was going on in Samaritan woman's heart. Jesus was able to see what was in people's hearts. That is so hard, isn't it? You don't know what that person's heart. You don't know what your parents are going through. You know what your children are going through. You don't know what other people are going through around you. It is hard to know what's going on in people's hearts, but I believe we can do it.

I believe that it will get better as we pay attention to them with a caring heart. When we have a caring heart, I think we can do that. Isn't that the depth of a person?

The greatness of a person is not how much money you have or what kind of career you have. The depth of the greatness of the person is how much that person knows you, deep inside the person who was able to do that is a great person. The person who was successful, that's I will measure success.

When I talk to some people, somehow they know my heart and then I look at them. How do you know me?

Reflection

With the depth of our compassion,

We are able to see what's in people's heart and then we can be connected with them. Those who are on the right-hand side of the king saw the needs of the people very clearly, but the ones on the left cannot see anything. My friends, "I don't care" is the worst thing you can say. I'm angry is so much better than "I don't care". By saying "I don't care", we are killing our spirit. I think I don't care is the most severe punishment you can give. Maybe that's why we use that quite often because when we're angry, we want to give the most severe punishment to that person, but let us not use that. Let's not do that. I don't care is the worst thing we can say to anyone. The people on King's lefthand had this "I don't care" attitude. That's why they cannot see anything, any need. They cannot see the prisoner. They can not see the naked. They cannot see a foreigner, stranger, but this "I don't care" attitude is what I see a lot in our world. That's how the world, how our world is operating. It's so sad and we shouldn't be angry that our role has become like that. We should fight against that. I don't care is not the right attitude to live your life with. Of course, we have to care for the poor, for the sick, for the people who are suffering. Of course, we have to care. In this world, they simply don't care about others. Even though caring life is the most basic thing we human beings do, they don't seem to be able to carry out.

That's a simple thing. It is sad. Caring is the most beautiful thing that you can give and you can receive. Without knowing the art of caring. We simply cannot enjoy the beauty of living. You're living in a fragmented world. People are not at all connected. We need to be in touch with people, especially people with suffering and we pray for them. Ecuador, Japan, and other places. Hundreds of people die, but it's just numbers. Hundreds, hundreds of people, but around hundreds of people, how many family members are crying right now? How many people are suffering right now because of that loss?

By taking on their pain, we can help their burdens lightened and it'll be much easier for them to handle their problems. Isn't that what we experience with our burdens are so heavy and somebody comes and

take away a little bit off our burdens and our lightened and we are able to handle that, handle all problems. We need to build a caring community where we are connected. That's a true community. A community is not gathering up people. The community is gathering of connected people. That's what spiritual community is all about. That is the depth of community. This materialistic world cannot give that. It replaces this deep community, with the shallow community such as social media. Through social media, you cannot be healed. Let us learn to care for one another. That's what Jesus taught us. That's what we human beings should learn to do. Let us sing.

Not Walls, but Bridges

August 14, 2016

Ephesians 2:13-14

Peace

This is what Saint Paul said, for he is our peace. In his flesh, he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall that is the hostility between us. Just reflect on this. What a powerful insight and a wonderful, beautiful vision. This is how Paul saw what Jesus did. This is Paul's interpretation of Jesus' life. Jesus' teaching. Jesus' action. He summarizes what Jesus did on earth. Paul's interpretation is very powerful and insightful. Paul saw the work of Jesus as the work of peace. Jesus came to give us peace. That is how Paul saw it. Paul never met Jesus in his life. He only heard about Jesus, heard about his teaching, heard about his ministry and his action, and yet he saw through what Jesus was thinking and what Jesus had in his heart, and he said this, Jesus came to bring peace, breaking down the dividing wall, putting an end to the hostility and bringing two groups into one and give peace to the world. That's exactly what Jesus also said. Jesus said this, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives." Last week we talked about forgiveness and in that context he also said, I will give you peace and this peace will be different from the peace that you can see in the world. It will be a very different peace that I came to give you.

That's what Jesus said, and Paul saw that so clearly and critically. How did he do that? That is just wonderful to me. Whenever I read Paul's epistles, it amazes me. It amazes me how Paul was able to figure out what Jesus wanted to do so clearly. That's why Paul said this, "there is no longer Jew or Greek. There is no longer slave or free. There is no longer male and female for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." In one sentence, Paul summarized what humanity is all about, what Jesus teaching is all about, and what life is all about. In one sentence, he was able to do that. How genius. No more division, but peace and oneness. That's what we aspire towards, what we are supposed to achieve. Race, religion, social status and gender. These used to be the walls, the calls for division, but Paul saw that these walls being broken down, crumbled down to the ground, and now there is no division but peace and unity. That was what Jesus did on earth. That was 2000 years ago. Not 200

years ago, 2000 years ago. He saw this vision, a wonderful vision in Jesus. Regionalism or parochialism was taken for granted at that time, so it was a status was what determined one person's identity, male domination was taken as a natural order of society, and yet Paul saw that the world Jesus envisioned at the time was different. That's why Paul was shocked hearing about Jesus.

These things were prevalent at the time, but Paul saw the world Jesus envisioned was very different from the world he witnessed during his time. Peace and oneness. That was what Jesus wanted to establish, young and old, male and female, rich and poor, white and black, all become one. It just amazes me about how Paul can see through Jesus' inner thought in our heart. How he could capture the world that Jesus dreamed about. Nobody truly understood what Jesus meant. Even the disciples did not understand what Jesus meant to the world, but Paul saw that. And what is more amazing about this is his message is so relevant to us today in 2016.

Division

His message is so relevant. Every day we are witnessing how fragmented this world is. We are living in a divided world, but my friends, division comes from within us, not anywhere else. Because we are divided inside, we create more division. Division comes from within us. We don't have peace and harmony within us. We are divided in our heart, you don't look inside. That's why in this world, there is much division.

For those who are not divided, for those who have peace within them, race is not the reason for division. For those who have peace within them, gender is not the reason for division. For that peace and harmony within them, our differences are not the reason for division. But the world has no peace and all these things divide us and we use them and we make excuses that these are the reasons for our division. Humanity is divided. My friends, I do believe that division is going to be a serious problem for the future of humanity and this division is as serious as the environment that we're living in. There's environmental corruption right now but this division is going to be a threat and it will bring a crisis to the future of humanity. We have to seriously change our attitude towards division. We have to turn it around. And think how can we live together in harmony and unity rather than in dividedness. This very serious issue that we have to tackle starting right now.

The WCC, the World Council of Churches is a worldwide church organization, which include Protestant churches, Eastern Orthodox, and many others, held a meeting in Busan, South Korea in 2013. And that day, they decided this particular Sunday, the Sunday prior to August 15th as the Sunday of prayer for the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula. That is the only country that is divided. So they have decided this. It's not just us who are praying for the Korean peninsula, but the whole world right now is praying for the Korean Peninsula that is a divided north and south. That country has been divided for more than half a century. But I do believe that is not just Korea that is divided. People are divided everywhere. Even in the same country. Martin Luther King Junior said at 11:00 AM on Sunday, we stand at the most segregated hour in this nation.

I'm reading a book called Disunity in Christ. It is written by Christina Cleveland, an associate professor of reconciliation studies at Bethel University in St Paul, Minnesota. She talks about how divided Chicago is. In fact, Chicago has recently been named the most segregated city in America. She said, "by simply knowing a person's race, you can predict where they live and even what teams they will root for." In Chicago, many black people live on the south side and many white people live on the north side and blacks tend to be White Sox fans and whites tend to be Cubs fans. So it's all divided. One of our congregation members, she is not Korean. She said once, she wanted her children to be exposed to more than just a white congregation. That's why she decided to come to this church so that her children may be exposed to different races. She has been here for some years. She is a Catholic and this church is Presbyterian. Catholic, Presbyterian, Pentecostal. Does it matter? Tomato, tomoto, potato, patato. Does it matter? Shall We dance?

Unity

Her cousin came from Maryland and last week she told me as she was sitting right here. She insists that she had to come to this church today. So they are here. She told me that she used to attend a Catholic church right downtown in Maryland. It is a predominantly black church. She told me it had a beautiful congregation. Their service is just like our service and she enjoys the service so much. But unfortunately, that church closed down because they didn't have a priest. And then she said, when I go back to Maryland, this time, I'm going to look for a church like this. We should celebrate diversity. We just celebrate our differences. Division is what destroys humanity. God created Adam and Eve and

said, two shall become one. It is not just a romantic passage about people who are getting married. Yesterday, I did a wedding and according to this passage, but it's not just for the romantic message for a married couple. This is for humanity. Two shall become one. Adam and Eve were different, male and female.

When Adam and Eve were created, the difference was created. The diversity was created, but God told them, you shall become one. Diversity should not be the reason for your division. You're two different people. There is a diversity, but you shall become one. Without diversity, there's no unity. Only uniformity. Uniformity is not unity. God told the first human beings to become one. Celebrate each other's gifts, respect each other's differences, but work together to become one. Reach out to those who are different from you and learn to build bridges, not walls. Don't build walls. Build bridges, and don't listen to the politicians who try to build walls because they are not Christians.

That was Jesus' vision and Paul saw it very well. Forgive each other, accept each other, appreciate each other, and respect each other. Learn to live harmoniously. That is humanity 101. Before you learn to make money, learn to live together with others in unity and harmony. Put down greed, put down selfishness, be generous and don't have us and them mentality. We are all one in the bond of love. There is no us and them. We are all one in the bond of love. That's what Jesus proclaimed and that's what Paul saw and that's what I proclaim and that's what you should proclaim to the world. That is the Gospel. We are one in the bond of love and that will be our pronouncement. We are proclaiming that we are one and Jesus made us one. He broke down all the walls to make all of us One.

Reflection Song and Prayer

Now let us pray together. Let us pray for the Korean Peninsula. The country's divided north and South, still threatening each other, but not only that country, but the Middle East and everywhere in the world. There's tremendous division, divided heart, animosity, hatred, continues to revenge, let us pray for humanity. That we may learn to live together, to co-exist, to love each other, to become one. Let us pray. This time, let us pray for ourselves. A lot of division is caused by us because we are divided within us. So let us pray for the healing so that our divided heart, may be unified and we may find true harmony within us. Let us pray for

ourselves so that wherever we go, instead of creating division, we bring reconciliation and unity and peace.

Maybe you can hold hands together with the person beside you and we'll sing together. We are one in the bond of love. Let us sing together. Just first the first verse. We are one in the bond of love.

Freedom and Abundance

October 23, 2016

Luke 4:16-21

Jesus' Vision

We are studying Galatians on Fridays and also Tuesday, and we'll start a Wednesday Bible study too. And also since we're at the end of the year, we are busy planning for 2017, next year. It is our 20th anniversary for this church and we need to think about what ministry is all about. And actually, what life is all about, because ministry and life, they are not separate. What life is all about and what ministry is all about.

Vision is very important. Without vision, we are dead. Vision shows where we need to go. It shows us clear direction of where our life needs to go. That's what vision is. Whatever we do, wherever we go, we must do it with vision. In our scripture passage today, Jesus, before he did any of his ministry, he laid down his vision. He did not come up with his own vision, he took it from the scripture, Isaiah, and then he took the vision for his life and for his ministry. And this is what he said, "He has come to bring good news to the poor. He was sent to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." That was Jesus' vision for ministry and that was Jesus' vision for His life. Think about it. Meditate upon that. That was what Jesus Christ came to do, and that was what his life was all about.

I'd like to talk about vision today with you. What is the church's vision? What does the church need to do? What is the church's mission on about? In this day and age, I admit, that church is not a place where people love to gather together. There are not many people who say, "I love to go to church." Or, "Church is a place that I love to be." You know, we get 50,000 people. I had Roger Center, but not at the church all the time. Even people who are going to church are kind of confused about what the church is all about. Why do I go there every Sunday? What is church all about?

It is very important for us to know what Jesus came to do, and the church needs to continue what Jesus came to do. If the church does that, then I believe that the church is relevant to people's lives, and I do

believe that church is relevant to people's lives. Even though Roger Center may be gone, but the church cannot be gone. That's what I believe, because the church is a very relevant, very important place. It doesn't matter how many people gathered together. Jesus was the one who established the church and the church is going to continue with the vision of Jesus Christ. And we're going to carry out what Jesus wants to do in our lives. In today's scripture, Jesus said he came to bring good news to the poor, to release the captives, to recover the sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim jubilee.

Look at it... When you look at this vision statement, one word comes to my mind? What is that one word? It is freedom. That's one word that comes to my mind. Freedom. At the end, the year of the Lord's favour, that is called 'jubilee'. Jubilee comes every 50 years, and on jubilee, they let the slaves go free. So even the jubilee is about freedom, and I do believe that Jesus came to bring freedom from suffering.

What Does Freedom Mean?

When we studied Galatians, we heard Paul's interpretation of what Jesus came to do. Oh, I'm reading a book right now, Paul – was he a follower of Jesus or was he the founder of Christianity? It's a very interesting book because Paul never met Jesus and then Paul never quotes Jesus in his letter, and yet Paul captured the essence of Jesus so well. He never met Jesus, but he captured who Jesus was so clearly. All other disciples could not do it. He was able to summarize what Jesus came to do, what Jesus' ministry was all about. And this was what is what Paul said about the coming of Jesus. Paul said, "Grace to you and peace from God, our father and the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins to set us free. "

Freedom to set us free from the present evil age according to the will of our God and father. Freedom. You know, freedom to the powerful and the privileged is to be free to do whatever they want. Because they have the power to do whatever they want, so for them, freedom is to do whatever I want. That's what freedom is to them. To me, that's a corrupted understanding of freedom. Freedom is not to do whatever you want to do. Freedom means to be liberated from what enslaves them, what oppresses them, and what makes them not to be who they are meant to be. That's freedom. Whatever enslaves you within you, if you are free from that, that is freedom.

God wants all of God's creation, every single one of us, to live abundantly. Abundant life, that's what God wants from all of us. God doesn't want us to live a miserable life. God wants us to live an abundant life. John captured that very well in Chapter 10. This is what Jesus said, "I came, that they may have life and have it abundantly." That's why Jesus came.

To give us the abundant life. My friend, money does not give the abundance of life. Don't be fooled. Money does not give the abundance of life. "Oh, money will give me the abundance of life!" That is a slogan of capitalism. Don't be fooled by the propaganda of the system of capitalism. "Money will give me abundance!" Lie. That is a lie. Deception. Sometimes money can even enslave you rather than giving you freedom and abundance. I don't believe in that. I don't believe in that slogan. Money may give me convenience, but not abundance.

What gives the abundance of life, I believe, is freedom. Only freedom can give you abundance. Jesus came not to give us money, he never said that. Jesus did not come to give us money. Jesus came to give us the freedom that makes our life abundant. You know, people work and work and work, and they make money... but when they go to a restaurant or when they see people around them who need their help and all that, they don't give any. You know? They all always think about getting it rather than paying for it. They have lots of money. Can we say that that person is abundant? That that person's life is an abundant life? Can we say that? Even though they have lots of money, they never pay, they never give for people around them. What do we call them? Cheap. We don't call them abundant, we call them cheap. They only think about themselves. They never share to give to other people. Abundance does not come from having money. Abundance comes from sharing the money. When you share more money with others, then you are abundant.

Generosity & Greed

Today and tomorrow we are going to collect offering for Haiti. I hope that you give generously. There are people who are suffering tremendous human suffering. I think that it is right, just simply right, for us to share our resources with them. Don't just give 10, 20 dollars. We're talking about people who are suffering or dying. When we are able to share freely with those who suffer around us, I do believe that that life is an abundant life. I think that that definition is a much better definition and

understanding than the slogan of capitalism, that money will make you abundant. Don't be a slave and fool of capitalism.

You have to have a philosophy of life. People who are the powerful and the privileged, they need to be free from the greed and selfishness. And that applies to most of us. To us, freedom is to be free from the greed and selfishness. As they share freely with those who are suffering around them, they shall be able to enjoy the abundance of life, and also help the poor and free the captives from their suffering. That should be our humanity. That is simply the right thing to do as a human being.

You know, I'm envious of Jews, Jewish people, because they have wisdom for thousands of years. It is recorded in their document and then they lived with that wisdom of life from generation to generation. I mean, these documents gave them – “This is what good life is supposed to be” – so I'm really envious of them. Our Christian history is very short, a few decades or a few hundred years, but they have thousands of years. They have this wisdom in that book, and that wisdom taught them how to let live their lives. This is what it said, “When you read the harvest of your land, you shall not reap the very edges of your field or gather their cleanings of your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the alien. I'm the Lord, your God.” How wise that is. Don't be aggressive for your own profit and benefit. Don't like deals so much. Don't like sales so much.

Don't be so aggressive for your own profit and benefit. “Oh, \$1000 TV? I got it for \$200! I'm so smart.” Be generous. That generous spirit is the abundance. Generous spirit. Having money is not the measure of abundance. Sharing money is the measure of your abundance. Saving money for yourself is not the best life philosophy or policy. Sharing the money with those who suffer around you is the best philosophy and policy. That is a principle of blessing. Again, I'm envious of Jewish people because they have all these things in their scripture. This is what God said to Abraham, listen, “When he first called Abraham, He said, ‘I'll bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing.’” Blessing to who? To others. I'll bless you so much that you'll be a blessing to other people. You will be the source of blessing. That's what blessings are like. Blessing is a flow from me to others to others and to others. It's a flow. If you're stingy, if you're greedy, you block that flow of blessing. My friends, please don't be a slave of capitalism. Please don't. Money doesn't make you abundance. Don't be a fool believing that!

It's A Trap

You will be destroyed. Your soul will be destroyed if you keep going that way. Share what you have with others. That is the purpose of life, not making money. Truly your soul will die if you keep doing that. Joy will be gone, peace will be gone. And then we don't even know what the purpose of life is all about after all. Blessing is a flow. Don't break – don't block that flow. Break it open, so that this flow really smoothly goes from one to another. Jesus came to break open this flow. Jesus shared everything he had – his time, his talents, his love, his gift. I see so much of enslavement in this day and age. People are dying. In the modern world, in the name of false abundance, so many people have become enslaved in their own greed and unhappiness. Why do you think people are so unhappy? Because they don't have money? No, because they have money.

They don't experience the freedom of life, and they don't experience the abundance of life. You know, you cannot enjoy the abundance alone. You can only enjoy the abundance with others, together. So in that sense, abundance is like a party. You cannot enjoy the party alone. "Oh, let's have party!" But you're all alone... How can you have a party? Abundance, same thing. You can only have abundance with others, together.

Let us not be fooled by the false teachings of this world. It's enough. We are being fooled enough, it's time to wake up. It's time to say, "Enough is enough." It's time to say "No. I'm not going to be fooled by that anymore. Because my life is very short. I'm not going to live for the rest of my life chasing after the money." Let us learn from God. The way to be free and abundant. You have enough material to enjoy the abundance of life, but only one thing that you need right now. That one thing is freedom. Freedom to share. Won't you join me doing that? Try it. Have freedom to share. You will see more abundance in your life. That's what a blessed life is like, and I do believe this philosophy much more than any other teaching.

Celebrating the 20th Year of Church Anniversary

October 20, 2016

Philippians 1:3-11

20 Years

As I look back on the last 20 years, the first thing that comes to my mind is, wow, time really flies. 20 years have already gone by. And another thing that comes to my mind is thankfulness. I'm thankful because God has been so good to us.

The Mysterious Hands of God

We've all experienced God's mysterious hands leading this church. The mysterious hands of God. These mysterious hands of God not only lead this church, but I believe that they lead our lives. Our lives are led by God's mysterious hands. The way our lives are unraveled is a mystery, I believe. It's not what we make. It is a mystery. And there are God's mysterious hands that lead our lives. As he has lead this church for the last 20 years, I do believe that God will lead this church in a way we cannot even fathom. How God will lead this church in the future is unknown, I cannot even fathom it, but there will be the beautiful hands of God that guide us mysteriously.

Live With Confidence

As we live our lives, my friends, I believe that we should live with confidence. Live your lives with confidence, because there's a big difference between living your life with confidence and living your life without confidence, and I'll choose to live my life with confidence. Confidence is so important in our lives. Doesn't matter what you do, confidence is so important. When we live with confidence, we are not scared of challenges. That's what living with confidence is like. You're not scared of challenges. Sometimes you may fail, yes, but failure is no longer a reason to quit. When you have confidence, failure simply means learning a good lesson. That's all. Failure is not a reason to quit. Failure is simple; a good lesson for you to learn from and move on.

That's people with confidence. We dare to try new things. New things will always bring us the uncertainty and the unknown, but the uncertainty and the unknown are not a reason to quit. Embracing the unknown, that is the beauty of God's gift. Longing and embracing the unknown, that is the beauty of God's gift. Uncertainty doesn't cause fear. We'd rather have beautiful longing and we embrace the unknown because that is the gift of life, and that is the gift of God for all of us. The uncertainty and the unknown mean going beyond where we are. That's all it means. Going beyond where we are. It means new opportunity and new change. And when we have confidence we have peace of mind because we know everything will be alright. That's why you have peace of mind. There may be difficult times, but we know that difficult times will not be with you forever. Soon good times will come. That's why you have peace of mind when you live your life with confidence.

So we wait with peace, but when we live without confidence we'll have no strength and no passion. We'll constantly worry. We'll constantly let fear consume us and paralyze us. We'll be busy maintaining the status quo. People who live without confidence, when there is no change, they think that's good news, because they're scared of changes. They don't want change, so there's no change and then they say, "Oh, good life." They will never get out of their own boundaries because they are continuously searching for safety.

For people with confidence, walls are only hurdles for you to overcome, but for people without confidence, walls are protection, so they build higher walls. That's the difference between people who live with confidence and people who live without confidence. So living with confidence is very important, but the question is, where do we get confidence? How do we have confidence? From our own ability? Or are we born with it? Some people are born with confidence. Some people are born living pessimistically. Some people are more pessimistic by nature, more cynical. Some people are more positive and I don't really know why.

St. Paul's Confidence

But I do know where St. Paul got his confidence. This is what he said, "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." That was the source of Paul's confidence. The one who began a good work will bring it to completion. That was where St. Paul got confidence. Not from his

ability. I don't know whether he was born with it or not, probably not, but he knew that the one who began a good work will bring it to completion, so he doesn't worry. Everything is a process, but in the end God will bring it to completion in God's time. Paul's confidence had nothing to do with himself. It wasn't from his ability or from his nature. It was God. Paul's confidence was God.

In God's Hands

And that's what I believe too. I have confidence not in me, but in God. I do have confidence. That's what I learned from my ministry in this church. God who began a good work will bring it to completion. I was 33 or 34, I spent my golden time here in this church and I've learned so much from the ministry, but one thing I learned, I have confidence that God who began a good work will bring it to completion in his time.

This church is not in our hands. This church is in God's hands.

As a matter of fact, your life is not in your hands. Your Life is in God's good hands. Do you believe that? Your life is not in your hands, your life is in God's good hands. That's what I believe about my children too. As I raised them, I was so busy so I couldn't spend much time with them. I always felt sorry to Josh and Grace. But I always believed that God will take care of them. God who began a good work in them will bring it to completion at the right time. And we don't decide that right time. God decides that right time. So all parents, trust that God who began a good work in your children will bring it to completion in God's time.

We Need Others

I realized these days, life is too big to hold with my two hands. I realized that. Life is way too big. When I was younger, I thought life was pretty small. I thought I could control it. I could put it in my hand. But as I got older, I realized that life is too big to hold with my two hands. We need other people's hands. That was what the last 20 years were like. There have been so many people who gave their hands to hold up this church. We can never do it alone. There have been so many good hands. You don't know, but there have been so many good hands that help hold up this church.

The Book of Romans

Romans is a beautiful book and there are a lot of good lessons and as we study Galatians, it's a beautiful book too right? We learned so much from Galatians, but Romans is much later. It was written when Paul's theology was much more mature. It's a beautiful book, but what is most inspiring for me is the last chapter. In the last chapter, there's no teaching, there is nothing. But in the last chapter, it just says greet this person and that person, he just makes a whole list of greet all these people and while I was reading that, I realized that these are the people who were with Paul in his ministry. All of them work so hard, so it was not Paul alone who built a church. All these people worked together to build the church. Our life is like that my friends.

We Are Being Shaped

We never made it all by ourselves. I didn't make it, 20 years of ministry in this church, more than I shaped this congregation. I think this congregation shaped me more. They taught me, they have shaped who I am and my thinking. This congregation has shaped me tremendously.

Our life is like that. You don't make your life by yourself, you are being shaped by the people around you, whether you like it or not. They have shaped you, your parents and your friends and all these people have shaped your life. Our life is made by others and with others. Sometimes we argue, sometimes we disagree. We challenge each other, but we pray together. We cry together. And most of all, we all know that we are all in this ministry together.

God's Invisible Presence

More than anything else, it was God who has been all along as an invisible presence. God's invisible presence is the most powerful presence. When we were down, we cried out and God lifted us up. When we stood helplessly, not knowing what to do in order to go, we prayed, and God broke open the door for us to go through. In spite of many mistakes we made, God worked through our mistakes.

When I look back, all I can say is this, I didn't know any better.

That's all I can say. When I look back, I didn't know any better. Don't you feel that sometimes? When you look back at your life 20 years ago, 30 years ago, or some of you are younger than 30 so, when you look back, "Oh geez, I didn't know any better." I just see how blinded I was, but God

did not mind it God worked through our imperfections. Now we are entering into a new chapter of our church, not as a teenager anymore. Twenty years is not a teenager anymore. You're entering into adulthood. As we enter into adulthood, I hope that we also become spiritually more mature.

Believe in the Church

I don't know about you, but I do believe in the church. I think among human communities, the church is the most beautiful place and now I see why God chose Church. So I believe in the church, not necessarily as an institution, but as living body, as a living community. We have all come together here.

Let us build this church beautifully together. Small hands that you give, they matter. In the next 20 years, let us build a beautiful church together and then give that church to our children so that they may carry it on. Let us build. Let us place the soil. Let us work hard. You don't come to church just for yourself. You come to church to build community. Then your children and their children after them, they'll benefit from this church. You are doing valuable things, worthy things in your life. If we build this church together. Let us have confidence in God who began a good work and God will bring it to completion in God's time.

Congratulations, and may God be with you in your ministry.

Serving is Living

January 15, 2017

Mark 10:35-45

Serving is not just doing it once, it's doing it our whole life

Serving is living. That is our theme for this year. This theme implies that serving is not just doing, but your whole lifestyle. Serving is living. Your life is serving. It is our attitude towards life. It is how we look at our lives. It is our perspective. How you see the world, how you see yourself, how you see your existence. It is our perspective for our lives. In that sense, what you do is not as important as who you are. The fact that your servant is more important. Than the wonderful services you may give, everything we do should come from the fact that we are servants and I realize that this is a very interesting way to look at our lives. Me, a servant, that is a very unique and refreshing way to define who I am and to define what my life is.

But these days I started, I mean in the first few weeks I've been focusing and reflecting on this servant hood. And I started appreciating the wisdom to see our life in that way. Maybe there is a secret of joy hidden in that lifestyle of being a servant. Maybe there's a joy hidden there. I think St. Paul found that joy. That's why I don't think he said it casually. He meant it in a very much when he said, for example, in Romans, Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle servant first. And the apostle. What is important to Paul was the fact that he was a servant. And in Philippians he said, Paul and Timothy Servants of Jesus Christ, that was a new identity Paul found for himself. Before he said, "I'm a Pharisee, I'm a disciple of Gamaliel" all these things he said, but now after finding Christ, he found new identity. He said that I am a servant, servant of Jesus Christ. Why don't you try to see yourself as a servant this year? You may enjoy that.

Serving Gives us Confidence

So this year's theme is not just what we do this year. This is maybe the beginning of new life. All of you, as you start seeing your life as servant, your life may turn out differently. You may find something that you never discovered before. Maybe there's some secret in that lifestyle. So maybe we start this year and it opens up a totally new lifestyle. I am a servant.

While, reflecting on this servant hood, one thing I've realized is this, somehow being a servant gave me confidence. You know, being a servant is being nothing, just live basically. It's not a really glorious way to look at your life, but when I look at my life as a servant I realized that it gives me confidence. Where is that confidence coming from? not from the recognition, not from the reward or award. I don't know what, where it comes from, but when I start seeing myself as a servant, it gives me confidence and I like to share with you today what kind of confidence I'm talking about.

Serving and Arrogance Don't go Together

In being a servant the first thing we have to have is humility. Being a servant and being arrogant. Don't go together. Arrogant people can never serve, they do lots of things, but that's not serving, lot of doings arrogant people can never serve. Being a servant, being arrogant they can never go together.

Humility. I do believe that has to be the basis on which, every human being should build his or her life. That's my philosophy. That's what I believe. Humility is the basis on which every human being should build their life on. I don't care how capable you are, I don't care how smart, how diligent you are. Humility has to be at there at the base. Humanity that is not based on humility brings disaster. It will collapse. Humanity has to be built on humility. Doesn't matter who you are. Doesn't matter how high you are in society, especially the leaders, presidents they should show humility. Humanity has to be based on humility.

Humility is Key

What is humility? I want to simplify this as much as possible for us to understand better. Humility is a condition in which you don't have to think about yourself too much. That's what humility is. Humility is a condition in which you don't have to think about yourself too much. You don't need to prove yourself to anyone. You don't have to prove yourself to the world. You don't even have to prove yourself to yourself. That is humility. What if? What if people think that I'm nobody? What if people think that I'm a failure? What if people think that I am ugly? All of these "what if's?" They come from the common fear of human beings? Humble people are those who go beyond this common fear of what if. Many people live out this fear, they look like they have achieved so much, but underneath they're still living out this fear. They have to constantly prove

to the world how worthy they are. Constantly have to prove that they are somebody and their life is not failure. They have to constantly show to the world how worthy they are.

You all know the temptation of Satan very much. When you look at temptation of Satan, what is the core thing? What is one thing? This is one thing. If you are the son of God, if you are the son of God, Satan is a master of temptation. He even knew how to tempt the most powerful man, Jesus. And his simple word is this. "If you are the son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread" and further along he said, "if you are the son of God, throw yourself down." Satan provoked the "what if" of human beings. What if I'm not the son of God? What if people don't see me as a son of God? What if son of God cannot do all these things? What if Satan attacked that? What if of Jesus Christ and Jesus was a humble man? He didn't fall into that temptation. Jesus basically said to Satan, I don't need to prove myself to you. Don't need to prove myself to you. You don't need to prove yourself to anyone around you, your friends or whoever.

Satan knew how to tempt Jesus. That's why Satan is a tempter. He has a PHD in tempting. Satan knew the basic human desire: "prove yourself." But behind that desire my friends Satan also saw the most terrifying fear hidden. What if I cannot prove myself? Satan hit the most vulnerable spot of human beings. Humility defeats this temptation and humility overcomes this fear. Humble people know that life is not about proving oneself. Life is not about me. Life is not about me. It's about serving. We don't live just to prove who I am. Life is simply basically about serving this. It is a new perspective. It is a new way of looking at our lives. People who are humble they discover simply that life is about serving. Whatever situation they may be, they always see the needs and they serve those needs. They are humble people. Jesus said, "you know that among the gentiles, those whom they recognize as their rulers, Lord it over them and their great ones are tyrants over them, but it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wishes to be the first among you must be slave of all"

The Greatest Vice of Human Beings is the Ego

The greatest vice of human beings is ego, self centeredness, nothing else. It's as simple this that the greatest vice of human beings is ego. Humility is the way to defeat that ego and overcome our ego. The only

way you can defeat your ego is humble service. The more you practice the humble service, the less you'll be obsessed with yourself. It is a simple change of our perspective, but it requires training and discipline to keep it up and slowly you'll become free from the imprisonment of ego. Humble people are the people who are free from the imprisonment of ego. Great people, wonderful people.

Last week was tough for me. Maybe it runs in the family. On my birthday last Sunday I got terribly sick and then while brushing my teeth I snapped my back. Then I lost my voice and that same week I happened to have both funeral and wedding where I had to speak. I could barely speak like now worse than this actually. Then I got infection in my eyes. I couldn't even see very well and to make it worse on the way out to get my medicine for my eyes. I got caught by police and he gave me three tickets. All those minor tickets, but all three tickets I mean, my birthday was last Sunday and only few days was it a delayed for my permit. I didn't renew my license, permit and they usually let go. Okay, cool, and do and then bring it back. He gave me a ticket, three tickets. God humbled me to write about humility, so I won't speak so much about humility anymore. Somehow at the funeral I was very peaceful and comfortable.

It's almost like a spiritual experience. It was not a funeral for one of my congregation members. Usually I do a funeral for the congregation members, but this time it is a relative of our congregation members, so when I got there, I knew nobody. I didn't know many people. My body was not very good, my voice, my eyes. Somehow my spirit was very high. You know what came into my head at that moment. This is message God gave me. I simply want to serve their needs. They are sad losing their mother, grandma. I just want to be with them and comfort them and give them words of comfort. I just simply want to serve them even though I don't have much voice to preach and sing. I want to comfort them. They must have done something two days ago. I got an email from the daughter a long letter of how beautiful the service was, how appreciative she was, and she even attended our service in KSM today. Life. It's not about you. Life is about serving. A lot. People that you can serve around you. There are a lot of people who need you who are in need, serving them is the most beautiful thing that you can do for humanity. Life of serving gives you a confidence since you simply want to serve. You don't need to worry about anything else. How will do you do? It's not that important. It can be quite comfortable. I don't need to insist on my way own way. As long as I see needs, I simply serve them

when the needs are not there anymore, you just move on. Life is not about me. Life is not just about how well I do. Life is about serving as best as you can in your capacity. As long as I can serve I am worthy. Don't try to find worth of yourself somewhere else as long as you serve, you are worthy. For the people who want to protect themselves, who want to show off, there's always some fear, fear of rejection, fear of not being good enough, fear of worthlessness, but those who wanna simply serve. There's no fear, only joy, only joy. All you can do is serve and that's all you will do.

Don't Worry About What you Become, Be a Servant

Young people here in this room, don't worry about what you become. Be a servant, a servant, that's all you gotta do. Give humble service. You'll be able to see life in a different way and you'll be able to see what you can do with your life. That's where the meaning comes. That's where the meaning of life comes in. Self serving life, no meaning. and life is all about you, no meaning. You simply serve? You find something that you never found before. Joy, meaning, passion. Life is great. I helped the 2017. You all start a life of service life will open up all the opportunities good things will come. When you try to have you realize you don't have much. You always lack, but even when you try to serve, you realize how much you have. With what kind of mentality do you want to live? Always, "Oh, I like this, I liked that, or I have so much to give. I would rather live with this mentality that I have so much to give. I'll tell you, life is life of blessing 2017, my life will be good. Why? Because all the bad things happened already in Korean is called active. All the bad things, gone all the good things are waiting for me. 2017. Happy New Year. Happy New Year to me and happy birthday to me.

Have a great life. Life is short. Have a great life and great. His life is life of surfing. That's why Jesus said I came not to be served, but to serve at a scene together.

Go and Do Likewise

January 29, 2017

The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

Two weeks ago we did a retreat for the KSM and we reflected on this theme, serving is living, and last weekend we did a retreat for the English service with this theme, serving is living, and serving is living is a theme for 2017. I hope that every week probably you may reflect on the meaning of serving – our life as a serving – so I hope that kind of theme becomes ingrained in our soul, in our body, in our thinking, in our consciousness... so that we really live this year, with serving as living. And I'm going to reflect on this passage today, and this is a very, very famous story. Not only Christians know this story, but even non-Christians and people from other religions, the whole world knows this story.

Good Samaritan. It is a good story, it is known as a very good story and it is a very important message for humanity. It's not just for Christians, for any human being, they should live with this message in mind. So they love this story and they like this story and I like it this story too. But somehow it is an important message and yet the meaning of this story is kind of not well understood. They got the wrong message, he's like, "Be nice to the strangers, be nice to people who're in trouble or difficulty or in need." But I don't think that is the main message of today's story. So that's what I'm going to expound with you, explore together, the true meaning of this story. The story started with a question from a lawyer and he asked this question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" A very important question. How can I live eternally? How, how can I have eternal life?

The Lawyer's Question

The very important question is about the eternal life. And hearing that question, somehow though, Jesus sensed that the lawyer already had the answer. You know, there's some questions you ask because you don't know and you want to find out, but there are some questions that you know, you have an agenda. You don't really ask that question, but

you want to say something else. So Jesus already knew, “Oh, this guy has an agenda, some kind of agenda.” So he already knows the answer, but he’s asking me this question. So Jesus is a very smart person, hearing one thing and he understands hundreds or thousands of much bigger things. He can see through people. So when he heard that question, he knew that he already knew the answer. So instead of answering him, he responded with another question. “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” At the time, the law was the Old Testament, and Jesus was right – this guy already knew the answer. He gladly and immediately answered. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself.” That is a sharp answer, a good answer... it summarizes the whole Old Testament. With just one sentence, he could summarize the whole Old Testament. The lawyer was very sharp, a very smart guy.

Or, he heard this message already before. Because when you read Mark, it was Jesus who gave this answer. It was Jesus who taught this message. So probably in another setting, this lawyer might have heard what Jesus taught. Now he’s answering what Jesus answered maybe, I don’t know. Anyway, it was a very good answer. Jesus was very pleased with his answer. Jesus said, “You have given the right answer. Do this and you will live in others. Do this, you will have eternal life.” But the lawyer’s real question was not there. The lawyer’s real question was in the second question. That’s what he wanted to get at. “Who is my neighbor?” Who is my neighbor? It’s not that he didn’t know the answer this time too. He already knew the answer. Sensing that he already knew the answer, Jesus now finally gave his answer with a story. That’s how the Good Samaritan story came about. He wanted to answer this lawyer’s question, “Who is my neighbor?”

From the beginning, the lawyer came to Jesus with a hostile attitude. When you look at the beginning of the story it says, “Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus.” Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. This test is to tempt, it’s not to test anything else but to trap him, to put him in difficulty or difficult situation. The lawyer was probably upset with Jesus. The way Jesus represented, Jesus’ message, Jesus’ actions, Jesus’ life, all these things. He wasn’t really pleased with what Jesus was doing. So he came to challenge Jesus. He came to confront Jesus, he came to prove Jesus wrong. So he asked this question for Jesus to publicly declare that “Who really is my neighbour?” Who are our friends? In the

lawyer's mind, it was very clear. He knew who was his neighbour, who was his friend. His neighbours are fellow Jews who abide by the law. Fellow citizens who are elite, who are doing well. They are the neighbours to this lawyer. Not sinners, not tax collectors, not prostitutes, not the poor, not the sick, not Syrians, not refugees, not Mexicans. The lawyer seemed offended by Jesus' attitude and teachings.

So Jesus gave this story, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. From Jerusalem to Jericho was 18 miles." I was there too, but it's a very dangerous and rough road. So at that time it was known as the way of blood because so many people were robbed and killed on the way. The man fell into the hands of robbers who stripped him, beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. People who are listening to Jesus, they nodded, "Yeah, yeah. That road is very, very dangerous. When you go there on your own, that can happen. Yeah, yeah, you're right." So they all identified with what Jesus was saying.

Plot Twist

But the story made a quick turn right there, and the story stabbed into the minds of people who were listening like a double edged sword. A priest and Levi passed by, but they didn't do anything. Your neighbour, your friends, they pass by, but they didn't do anything. Jesus did not give a reason why they just passed. Probably for their own safety. Or "That guy, I don't know whether he's dead or not, but he's been attacked. Maybe there's still robbers around." Or, who knows? Or "This guy may just be pretending that he was attacked. He's just pretending he's an innocent victim, maybe he's a robber. If I go there, he might attack me."

They wanted to put a distance when on the other side. They were thinking about their own safety. Strikingly, a Samaritan came to help this man who was badly hurt. People who were listening might have shouted in their minds, "Samaritan? Of all the people, Samaritan? No, please. A Samaritan cannot do this. Samaritans cannot do any good" At that time, the Jews and Samaritans did not get along very well. There's a history behind it, but I don't have time and you don't have patience to listen to all the history, so I'll just skip it. But they were just bad to each other. That's why people in the southern part and some areas and Galilee, they had to go through the same area. They didn't want to go through the land of Samaritans. They went around, took detours. But it was stranger, Jesus went through Samaritan areas and met a Samaritan woman when you look at John 4. But they didn't really along with each other.

But it was a Samaritan who helped the person in trouble. Then, a very, very important question came. That question penetrated into the soul of the people. "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" Which of these three? That lawyer had to answer Jesus' question this time. He came with a question, but now he had to answer Jesus' question. He said, "The one who showed mercy." Look at this answer. Look at this answer. The one who showed mercy... he couldn't say Samaritans. He wouldn't say Samaritans. He wouldn't name it. "The one who showed mercy." Jesus thought that was good enough. So he said, "Go and do likewise." Go and do likewise.

Go And Do Likewise...

Now you know who your neighbour is. Go and do likewise. Who is our neighbour? Mexico will not think the USA is their neighbour just because they are neighbouring countries. The people who are captured in the airport, they would think that the USA is their neighbor. There's some Harvard students, Stanford students, they wanted to go away for a study trip and on the way back, they got trapped. People who work at Google, they went away for business. On the way back, they are trapped. I don't know what can the world we live in. The whole world is moving toward protectionism. Me first, me first. Us against them.

We become heartless and loveless. Jesus was right when he said, "At the end of the age, people will become loveless." To show mercy is not easy. Sometimes there is danger involved. The Samaritan risked the danger to show mercy, my friends. Always, showing mercy takes priority. Showing mercy takes priority. That's the teaching of Jesus, the teaching of Christianity. That's why Jesus said, "Go and do likewise." My friends, don't let your consciousness, don't let your conscience, don't let your mind be tainted by the teachings of the world. Listen to the teaching of Jesus Christ. That's who we are. The one who showed mercy to anyone. That's our neighbour.

Together We Stand

February 12, 2017

1 Corinthians 3:1-7

Paul and Apollo

Gospel stories always have implications not only for individuals personally, but for the church, for the society, for humanity. It has implications, so when we hear other gospel stories, we have to always remember that it has a social significance.

At the same time, it has a personal significance and also spiritual significance. As you see into the scripture, the Corinthian church was divided. There were people who followed Paul and there were people who followed Apollos. Paul and Apollos were leaders in the Clinton community. Paul was the one who founded the Corinthian community, and Apollos came later, but he was very eloquent and he had charismatic influence on people.

Paul and Apollos never had problem with each other, they were not divided at all, but people were divided. People used Paul and Apollos for their own personal agenda and take control, control of the community. When they were fervent, they were religious. They thought that they were good believers, but in Paul's eyes, they were like infants. They're not mature Christians. I mean there are some people who really are religious and all that, but in Paul's eyes they look like infants. So Paul saw this as very immature attitude and he said this, "I fed you with milk, not solid food for you because you're not ready for solid food. Even now, you're still not ready for you're still of the flesh for as long as there's jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving according to human inclination?". Divisive attitude is spiritually immature attitude. A spiritually mature person always tries to build and bring unity even though it may not be the sole purpose, they try their best to bring unity wherever they go.

Becoming One

A church is a place where all kinds of people gather together. Politically, we have very different views. Every one of you probably has a different

political colour and are culturally very different. There are some Koreans and non Koreans, others first generation some second generation, Korean speaking and English speaking, some with different hobbies and interests, and finally some who are doing well economically and financially and some who are not doing well. Church is diverse. If the church consists of spiritually immature people who can only drink milk, the church will be divided and many people will get hurt. We have seen this as a historical example, the Korean community in the early immigrant life. They fought so much with each other and so many people got hurt in the middle. We'll have to spiritually grow to bring unity and harmony in the church. Trying to make everybody like me is not the way to bring unity and harmony. If you have enough influence and power, you may achieve uniformity, but that's not unity. Uniformity is not in unity. If you have enough power, you can have a small group and build some kind of uniformity and think alike, do things together, but that is not uniform.

Unity Among Everyone

A unity is possible only when there is diversity unity is possible, unity without is not unity. Harmony is possible only when they there are different notes. When you sing in unison, you cannot bring harmony. So unity is a very different picture from uniformity. Saint Paul knew very well this diverse character of community, and this is what he said in the same letter. We didn't read it today, but in the same letter he said in Chapter 12, "indeed the body does not consist of one member, but of many. It's not just one member, and diverse people are in the community". Saint Paul said that "you have no right to tell another member that you don't belong here". In other words cliquishness, Paul does not like that kind of attitude. All the racism and sexism, all go together. Whenever there is a problem, the people tell immigrants, go home, go back to your own country. I mean, they were born here, they lived here all their lives and often days they go home. That kind of attitude Paul does not allow. This is what Saint Paul said "I cannot see to the hand, I have no need of you because you don't look like I, nor again the head to the feet. I have no need of you".

That's not the right thing to do in the Christian community or in our society, or a larger global community. That's not something that you are to say to each other. We all belong to this earth. We all belong here. We are all different, but we are one that is a miracle. We are all different, but we are one. Everyone is welcomed. This is what Saint Paul said "Now

there are varieties of gifts, varieties of services, and varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone". When you look at all the red, our varieties, that's belongs to human beings, all of us, we're all different, but unity belongs to God. The spirit, the Lord, all the blue letter, we may be all different, but God is the same. We have to understand this very basic composition of the church. We are all different and that is the face of the church. Don't try to coerce each other to be like you. Accept, allow each other to be the way they authentically are. That's what Christian community is all about. We don't achieve oneness by coercing other people to be like me. We achieve oneness, only by valuing each other, each person value each person's gift and what each person can bring to the community. When we start valuing that, then unity becomes reality. Saint Paul recognized this very well when he said, "I only planted the church and Apollos watered it, so who cares if I planted it and who cares if Apollos watered it? We're nobody we are nothing, but it is God who brings growth". Look at that. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth so neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything but only God who gives the strength. My friends power, device, love unites power by its nature, device and power rules. There's always powerful, the powerless, the haves and have nots, the rich and the poor, white and black. Whenever you try to build a community with power, there will be division, whether it's a personal, moral, spiritual or even religious power. When power starts ruling the community, the community divides, but when the love rules the community, it brings unity.

The One Who Can Bring Unity

When you plant a church with love and sacrifice, the church will grow with the help of God. Growth comes from God. What we do is nothing and will not bring growth. When we serve with him, with humility and love, God will use us to bring growth. I realized this truth, I can never bring unity. We can never bring unity. I only humbly serve. Only God brings unity. Unity is God's gift for all of us. Recognizing that we serve each other with love and humility and what love looks like, what does love look like? It looks like this it's very simple.

Let me tell you, Saint Paul said "but God has so arranged the body giving the greater honour to the inferior member. That's a secret. Give greater honour to the inferior number, a member that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer with it. If one member

is honoured, all will rejoice together with it. That is what love looks like. If you truly have love, you always honour and lift up the one who is inferior to one who is broken. That's what love looks like. You don't just honour the powerful. You don't just honour the popular ones, you honour the inferior member. That's what love looks like. That's very different from the teaching, a message of this world. When you build a church with a love, this, you will be able to see that is a sign of a community. Whether that community is built by love or power. When you see the community that is built by love, you'll see that members appreciating and honoring the inferior members, and I do believe that this applies to global community too. We have to honour those countries. We have to honour those people who are oppressed, suppressed, rejected because of their lack of power. We don't conquer them. You don't trample upon them. The greater honour to the inferior member of the global community, that's what Paul's teaching is all about. The country that is run by power will divide and ultimately collapse, that's what history tells us. Any country that is run only by power will divide, collapse, decline. Even though it is the empire, there'll be a decline of the empire. For the country that is run by love, justice and compassion, will unite and grow. That's what we believe. That's what Christians believe.

Together we stand. Whenever I look at Korea, the only country that is divided politically in every way. I hope that there is some kind of unity, and when I look at the global community right now, everyday I get saddened and everyday I read the newspaper, I get saddened because we are fragmented. This whole world is divided, fragmented into pieces. Everybody is so hungry for power, for concurring. We have to restore love, justice, and compassion so that we can create the Kingdom of God. God may build the Kingdom of God. That's what I pray. May God's rule come. May God's kingdom come. May We human beings repent of our sins of greed and let God of compassion rule, then unity will be reality.

Welcome the Stranger

February 26, 2017

Leviticus 19: 9-10

Matthew 10: 40-42

1 Peter 4:9-10

Welcome All Everywhere you go

I like this English word “welcome”, I think it’s a wonderful word. Whenever I hear this word, I feel warm. I feel good. It makes me feel loved and accepted wherever I go. When they welcome me. When they say that word welcome. I feel good. Even when I go to Boston, when I land, I see this sign; “Welcome to Boston” and I feel welcomed. I don’t know whether they really welcome you are not now, especially these days. But when I look at the sign, I feel good. I feel welcomed, this should be the way we human beings should interact with each other. Doesn’t matter where you meet them, just welcome each other. This should be the way we human being should interact with each other. Even in the church sometimes I feel people pass by and don’t even say hi, why would they do that? Did I offend them in any way? Why won’t they even greet me with eye contact? We become so defensive.

Practice Welcoming Strangers

We don’t really welcome other people. You know, when I came back from Madagascar I went out there for a mission and I lost my connecting flight in Paris. Nice place to miss your connecting flight. I arrived there in the morning just 20 minutes I was late. The first plane from Madagascar was late so for 20 minutes, so I lost it, and the next flight was next day, next morning. So I had a whole day in Paris alone. So I walked around everywhere and it’s not, it’s not the picture that I took, but I just walked along the the thin river and I took the subway from the Tegel airport and then just looked at Eiffel Tower, and that’s a place I gotta go, I just walked along the same river and I asked people and you know, many people told me the French people are kind of rude, especially if you speak English, but that was not my experience. They were so friendly, and nice. They gave me a really detailed instruction and how to get there and all that stuff. They welcomed me. I felt like, yeah, I can live in the city, so I felt really welcomed there. This word welcome is what you

should practice to your two strangers, to your family, to your friends, to the people that you don't know. Welcoming heart. That is something that we need to have. You know, when the new people come to our church, they often say the most scary places, most scary place is a fellowship hall. Worship is fine and everything, but once they get into the fellowship hall they don't know who to talk to, so they feel very awkward. So it's a difficult place to be in the fellowship hall. So if you see somebody that you don't know very well, then your warm smile and kind words mean a lot.

Make welcoming Strangers in Your Life a Mission

Even as a pastor, a long time ago, when I first went to Toronto, Korean Presbyterian Church to work as a part time pastor, I felt so awkward and nobody came to talk to me. I mean, they're all here now. Nobody came to talk to me. But the one person that really made me feel welcome was Barbara Bay. She came up to me and she's really good at that, you know, and she talked to me. She smiled as she explained about the church and all that. Even as a Hi-C pastor at that time, I feel so welcomed. I encountered a very interesting book, it's called "when strangers meet" and subtitle is "how people you don't know can transform you." Very small book, very interesting book. It was written by Tarik. She also spoke at Ted talk. She felt bad when people became so indifferent to each other and she didn't like to see that.

That's why she was contemplating writing a book about welcoming other people, how we can talk to strangers and she made that as a mission. Her mission. "I'm going to go and talk to strangers because strangers or people don't talk to each other." They treat each other like, they have their guard against each other. So this is what she said. She said in her book "talking to people who are different from us can be radically transformative, if it's the antidote to fear" So she tries to talk as much as possible to strangers. It is almost like her new found mission. It is resistance to the world where people become indifferent to each other and by doing that people, human beings have become so inhuman and this is what she said "talking to people I have never met is my adventure. It's my joy, my rebellion, my liberation. It is how I live. This is how we live. Why do we have hostile attitude towards other people? Is it because I have hostility within me? Why are we angry with other people that we don't know, they didn't do anything? Why do we avoid them? Why can we approach them? "Hi, how are you?" I do that in the elevator as much as possible. Most people kindly respond. "Hi." Some of them

even invited me for a drink and I gave him a number. He never called me, and that's how I met him again. "Oh yeah, yeah, sure. Yeah, we'll do that." Still didn't call me, but at least, you know, a kind gesture, maybe by mistake. I told him that I was a pastor. Maybe that's why he didn't call me for a drink. You know, we try to avoid people we don't know. We put a guard against them. Instead of welcoming them in. We create a distance for them. You know when I see that that's not nice. This shows me a weak character of a person. When they do that, in First Peter, Peter taught us be hospitable, hospitable to one another without complaining. Being hospitable has the same meaning as welcoming. When you invite a guest to your home and you welcome them, you will treat them nicely and you make them feel at home. That is being hospitable and from there, word hospital came. Hospice came, all the good things came from that word. Many cultures have this hospitality built within their culture, Korean, Italian, Taiwanese, Chinese, Vietnamese. They all have this hospitality built within the culture. The Koreans, for example, we never let strangers go home hungry. We always feed them. That's Korean culture. Jewish people also had some very beautiful tradition. We read a portion of it today. Let me read it again. When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest.

Do not Bear all your Fruit to yourself

You shall not strip your vineyard, bare or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You should leave them for the poor and the alien, is not really from Mars, so here it means a stranger for the poor and the stranger. I am the Lord your God, don't harvest to the edge of it just for your benefit. Just leave them so other people, the poor people, strangers can also benefit from that. That's a beautiful hospitality built in within their culture. This is how we human beings should live. You don't just take care of the people you are comfortable with. Same Age, same culture, same race, same gender, whatever. You don't just take care of people who are like you. You don't exclusively socialize with people who are like you. You need to reach out to people who are very different from you. You need to be comfortable with strangers.

Fear of Strangers versus Loving your Stranger

There's a beautiful English word that came from Greek it's not commonly used so probably you don't know the meaning of the word, it's called "Philoxenia." Philo meaning a love or friend, Xenia meaning strangers. It's like treating strangers like your friend. That's what Philoxenia is. Whenever you meet strangers, you treat them like your friend, but there's another word that comes from the same root which we use quite often these days in the newspaper, everywhere that is xenophobia. Same word as xeno is a stranger. Phobia is fear. Fear of the people who are different from you. Fear of the people who are strangers. These days we see more xenophobia than Philoxenia.

Let all Oppositions Come Together in Harmony

It requires character to treat strangers like your friends, and we should do that. That's what Jesus taught us to do. Henry Nouwen talked about hospitality in this way, I thought he was quite articulate about hospitality. This is what he said. "Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the strangers can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom, not disturbed by dividing lines." What a wonderful vision about hospitality. This is welcoming strangers, and creating space to welcome strangers. Jesus also taught us how to live. Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me, and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of the disciple. Truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward, it's a wonderful thing to welcome people. We should think about our attitude towards people we don't know very well, that will have profound impact on our lives. And then your children, please teach them to say hi. Even this morning, the downstairs in the basement. I walked in, they didn't even look at me. I feel rejected in my own church. What did I do to you?

Once I went to Niagara with our church group, it was lunchtime. I looked around, there are a whole bunch of people and there was one group, another Korean group, Koreans always everywhere. And then, another group, the majority, most people were white. They were from Niagara Geological Society. And another group, there was an Afghanistan group. And then after lunch I had this urge, "I gotta go, towards these people" almost like a pastoral urge. I had to do this. So I started going, you know, I went to the Korean group, you know, as you predict, gave me something to eat. They're good at that. So I ate something with them

and talked a little bit. And I moved onto a geological society and they welcome me and they told me what they were doing in Niagara and all kinds of things they were explaining to me. Then finally I went to the Afghanistan group, and then an old man was sitting there. So I sat down and started talking, while talking. Oh, this man started crying. He had tears in his eyes. And then he told me his wife just passed away a month ago, so I was listening to him and comforted him. Then after, he started calling one family, about 25 people, and he started calling his relatives, his cousin, his brother and his brother's wife. Then everyone's lined up to just to greet me, and I realize, this is Heaven. This is the Kingdom of God. That's what Kingdom of God is like. People are different. People are strangers gathered together and celebrate our oneness together. And we share our life with each other. Wasn't that the vision that Isaiah saw? This vision of Isaiah, the wolf shall live with the lamb. The Leopard shall lie down with a kid, the calf and the lion together and the little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze. The young, shall lie down together they will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Natural enemies come together, live together harmoniously. That was the vision of Isaiah. This world, these healings. We were influenced by the culture of this world, the materialistic culture of this world where we have become inhuman, being inhuman. We need to be healed. We need to restore our relationship with each other at sync together.

One and Many

November 17, 2017

Luke 15:1-10

Lost and alone

When I read this passage, I could imagine a sheep wandering all alone in the darkness, in fear and trembling. How scary it must be. There were a lot of wild animals around in the darkness. And how lonely it must have felt. When I was young, I was once lost in Changgyeong Palace. Changgyeong Palace in Seoul, Korea. A very crowded place. It was a scary experience. I was chasing after a balloon and after about 10 minutes I looked around. There was no mom around and I can't remember exactly, but the emotion, that scary emotion was still very vivid to me.

It is the best feeling to be in 99. We feel safe, warm and comfortable. We don't feel alone. There's a group that I can belong to. It is a good feeling to have people around us whom we can depend on, talk to and get advice from. A sense of belonging. It is very important that I belong to somewhere.

When I went to Yale last weekend, when I first got there, I was the only Canadian. There were all Americans and I looked around I was the only Asian. Oh, my goodness. I was sitting there alone, but soon they made me feel so comfortable. I had a great time with them. Two evenings later, about 13 of us, went out for dinner and they found a good place. And then the one guy just paid for everyone. I told them "that's only what Koreans do." And they paid for him. It was a really wonderful experience that I had.

Being alone is hard. Some kids who are alienated in school experience serious pain. Some of them even commit suicide, but it's not just children that seek acceptance. But it is also important for all of us, for adults to have a sense of belonging. We don't want to feel rejected, not wanted. You want to be recognized, respected and loved. Mother Theresa said this "loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty." I think it's pretty profound statement. We should never make other people feel this way, but there are a lot of people

around me and in the world who live with this loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted. They live day by day in isolation. When I go to the nursing home I feel terrible loneliness. And loneliness is a universal experience in our fragmented world.

When we are in deep pain, we feel loneliness. We feel that you're all alone. When people have a serious illness that's what they say. "While they're waiting, they don't just have fear for the unknown future, but they also feel terrible loneliness, feeling that nobody can help me. I'm all alone to fight this." When Jesus was on the cross, he said, "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He didn't say that God had abandoned him. That's not what he was saying. He was expressing his deep pain, the pain of being disconnected and totally abandon from everything, including God. That is a pain that we read. When we are in deep pain we feel lonely. Especially when we feel that we are alienated and feel worthless and feel the nobody understands us we experience pain in loneliness. The lost sheep represents the people who lost not just their way, but everything. Confidence, self-respect, and self-worth. And these people feel lonely, not simply because they are alone physically, but deep inside they feel that I'm not wanted. Deep inside, they feel that I'm worthless. Nobody wants me, nobody understands me. I'm all alone in this giant universe.

Finding yourself

What is the solution? I don't think the solution is not just trying so hard to be a part of 99. I don't think that is a solution. It is not good to try to be a part of 99 simply because it is more comfortable. We may feel lonelier sometimes we can lose ourselves in the crowd. When you look at the story in the Bible, for example, Job, he lost everything. He lost his honor, dignity, respect, everything! He lost his health. He lost his children. He lost his wealth. Everything was gone. For more than anything else. He felt terribly lonely, losing everything. He was all alone. Job's friends came to comfort him, but they made Job feel lonelier. Job needed his friends, but he cannot just join his friends, agreeing with them superficially just to be part of them, just to be one of them. He couldn't do that. He had to find himself. He had to find his own way. That was why Job argues so much with them, not because Job was argumentative, but he had to find himself. He cannot just be part of them. Agreeing with what they were saying. Samaritan woman was like the lost sheep. She feels alienated from people. In reaction, she made herself isolated. "You don't want to see me? I don't have to see you. I can live by myself." So

she was living in isolation. She cannot just go back to people and join them. Even if she went back by being just like them, completely ignoring her own needs, she would not have lived a happy life. But when she found herself through Jesus, she was able to go back to them. Actually, when she found herself, the first thing she did was to go back to the people.

When we feel lonely, our answer is neither just to look for a group to join, nor to live alone in loneliness. I only see these two kinds. They feel lonely, so they look for friends. Friends not to share deep stuff but friends to forget about your loneliness, friends to just have fun. That's not a friend, that's not friendship. If you just have friends because you wanted to avoid your loneliness, you're just using them. But there's also some people cannot even find friends so they just give everything. They just live alone. But, I believe that when we feel lonely, I think that is the best time to meet God in a meaningful way.

We can never meet God unless we are alone. To have a meaningful encounter with God, we need to be alone. When we are alone, sometimes we can see things more clearly. When we're with people, we don't see it. But, when we are totally alone, we can see life much more clearly. More often than not, when we are alone, we have a higher chance to be able to meet God in a meaningful way. We just finished studying the life of Jonah. When he was on the boat with other people, even though he faced a storm, he cannot really see things clearly. He cannot even see himself. He could not find himself, he cannot find God. But when he was thrown into the ocean, when he was all totally alone at the bottom of the ocean, in the belly of the fish, when he was alone, he met God in a radically new way. When Jacob home and slept in the wilderness alone, and when Jacob took his family across the river first and when he was alone at night, that was when he met God meaningfully and he found his identity, Israel. He found himself, he found God. Moses', Samaritan woman and Paul. They're all like that. When they were alone, they met God. That's why Jesus often at times likes to be alone. He was always surrounded by people, but he had to move away from them. He went and wanted to alone.

Finding an Opportunity

Being lonely is not what you experience all the time, but when you experienced that, use that opportunity to meet God instead of quickly finding friends. Use that opportunity just to sit before God. Jesus told us

today and in the scripture, the shepherd will never leave us alone. When we feel lonely, the shepherd comes to look for us. Whether it was because of our mistakes, stupidity or the situation or people who made us feel isolated, it doesn't really matter. God does not look for a justifiable good reason to come to us. There's no such thing as, "well I'm lonely because people make me lonely," but sometimes we feel lonely because of your sin, because of your mistake. When you're at the bottom of your life, you feel lonely. It doesn't matter why. What is important to God is that the fact that you are lonely and will God come to us. To go one step further don't just wait until you feel lonely. We should practice to be alone, even to be lonely. Sometimes don't even turn on the TV, don't turn the radio, don't distract yourself. Just sit. Even if you feel lonely, that's what we need.

It is comfortable to be in the crowd, but if we are in the crowd all the time, we cannot meet God. Jesus said implicitly in today's scripture, 99 righteous people who need no repentance, very interesting expression. 99 righteous people, who need no repentance, who doesn't really need repentance? We all need repentance. In other words, the crowd who doesn't know themselves. That's what Jesus is talking about. The 99 who needs no repentance is the crowd or the mob that doesn't know themselves. Sometimes when we are in the crowd, we'd lose ourselves. We don't know ourselves.

I experienced that when I used to be a youth pastor for the teenagers. These teenagers individually when I meet them, they're a human being. But when you gather them together, they turn into animals, beasts! Where did they come from? They lose their personal identity and just become a mob. Sometimes we are like that. When we are alone, we find ourselves. But, when we are in the crowd, sometimes we lose ourselves. We don't even know who we are. In the 99 who needed no repentance, we cannot truly find God. We can find God in the one who is lost because God will leave the many to look for the one who is lost.

We sometimes live our lives totally losing ourselves in the crowd. We do not know who we are. We do not know what we want. We do not know what God wants from us. A sign that shows that people are lonely is that they always look for people. They look for something to do to distract them from themselves because they are scared of being lonely. Let us be courageous. we need to leave the crowd and be all alone. We need to find what is really important to us, what we live for, who is God to us?

Loneliness. Sometimes it's the best place to do that. So being lonely, it's not necessarily all bad.

I shared that with our women's Bible Study Group. I was at a silent retreat. I really looked forward to it. Silent retreat at a center. There is nothing that you do. You're just go and be silent. Nobody talks. When you eat lunch, nobody talks to you. We just say hi, but you don't say hi. You should say hi with your eyes. After you eat lunch, you just go back to your room. First Day was great. Oh, my goodness. I had so much time. I got so many books I started reading. I enjoyed thoroughly. The next day, "so what do I do now?" I'm all by myself. I can't talk to anybody. And I was feeling a little uneasy. And the third day came, I started missing shopping center. Oh, my goodness. I need people. I need to see people. I need a crowd. I need the hustle and bustle around me. And I felt totally lonely. And the next day came all the darkness coming up and I asked myself, who are you? Who are you? Sometimes loneliness can bring a miracle to us. You could totally awaken you.

Reflection

Second Secretary-General of UN, a Dag Hammarskjold was awarded the Nobel peace prize and he was a very good diplomat and he said this, "pray that your loneliness may spur you into finding something to live for, great enough to die for." I think it's a pretty profound statement. When I went to Yale, I just left the crowd one day for a few hours. I walked around Yale campus and I was just by myself. It was so good. And then I was thinking about what is that something that I live for and what is that something that I die for? After all, I attended the seminar. The title was Life Worth Living. So I want you to think about that.

When people who have meaningful time with God and with themselves in their lonesome, when these people gathered together to make up 99, that 99 will not be the 99 who do not need repentance. The 99 will be the spiritual community. People who gathered together just because they are lonely do not make a spiritual community. They will just use the community. I just need that group. The spiritual community will never be built like that. Two lonely people came can make each other lonelier. Just because you're lonely, don't meet people. You can make yourselves lonelier. Let us have time alone with God and come back and reach out to those around us. In that way, we build a spiritual community. Let us defeat, together, the loneliness that is predominant in the modern technocratic society. We human beings become isolated in this

technocratic society. Let us defeat loneliness. This society makes being a human being so lonely but by being together we can build a spiritual community. Let us fight the loneliness.

Let's Plant the Kingdom of God

June 17, 2018

Mark 4:26-34

Challenges to Plan the Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God is what we plant. The Kingdom of God is not just given to us. It's something that we plant, it's a like a new kind of concept, new idea but I discovered that from this passage. Ah, Kingdom of God is not just given to you or is not just coming to you? The Kingdom of God is something that you plant, every day. But in planting the Kingdom of God, two things that you have to remember and two challenges you have to remember the first one is: the growth of the Kingdom of God is not visible. Once you plant the seed in the soil because it's under the soil, you cannot see the seed growing. It is just there, but you're not sure whether it's doing anything. Sometimes we feel when we see the progress that we get energized, we feel like, wow, something is happening. Something's going great, so you work harder, but when you don't see any result for what you do, sometimes you wonder; what I do, does it make any difference? When we feel that we feel like giving up, we get discouraged when we don't see the result, but today Jesus gave us the very important truth and that truth is the earth produces of itself.

God only can give the growth

It is not us, which makes the seed grow, but it is the earth itself. Once you've planted, then the earth will take care of it, the soil will take care of it. My job is to plant the seed and it is the job of the soil to make it grow, and that truth Jesus told us and that truth is also spoken by an apostle Paul. He said, I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth so neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything but only God who gives the growth. Once we plant it. You don't need to worry about it, it is God who makes it grow. The second thing that you have to remember, the second challenge you have to remember is that from a mustard seed is so small. I don't know whether you saw most or not. I've seen a few, but when you really look at it carefully, you cannot really look at it, so small and this is what Jesus said, it is like the mustard

seed, which when sown upon the ground, it is smallest of all the seeds on the Earth.

That is the what the Kingdom of God is like. Jesus is comparing the kingdom of God to the mustard seed. It is so small you cannot even see it well. Sometimes we wonder what we do for the Kingdom of God is so small. We are so small. We feel like we are not significant enough to be able to make any difference in the world. What difference can I make in the world? Sometimes we feel so insignificant. I'm the person who has only one talent. You know the parable of talents, the person who received one talent, two talents, and five talents. The people who received two talents, five talents worked really hard that produced double. Another two talents, another five talents. But the person who received only one talent, he didn't do anything because he felt that one is not good enough. One talent is not good, sometimes we feel like that.

It is so small.

What we do is so limited, so small, we feel discouraged and we easily give up, but even though it is small in the beginning when God touches it. It grows, it becomes a shrub. It becomes a big tree. So under the shadow, the birds will come and enjoy that being under the shadow, even though you look very insignificant, not important enough, but when God touches you. Through you, you can give so much rest to many others. You can make other people, abundant. Not only is your existence becomes abundant but through you, many other people's lives will become abundant. When you really look at Jesus. Jesus never was never a political person or international person. He just stayed in Jewish land; Galilea and Jerusalem. A few times back and forth. That's all he did. His geographical boundary was so small, he only worked with 12 disciples, 12 people every day sitting down and teaching them and all that.

And in these 12 disciples were not really extraordinary leaders, they didn't understand what Jesus was saying, Jesus feels so frustrated, but he kept teaching them that small seed became the plant that changed the whole world. St Paul, he ministered few churches, but only 30-40 people, and even though, in that small group, there were so many problems. Sexual immorality and the fight and division, all kinds of problems he faced. But he wrote his letter every day, without really realizing that this letter will be a read two thousand years later, in

Etobicoke by St. Timothy people. He never expected that. But he wrote it. He planted the seed and that seed became the giant scripture that everybody reads it and gets inspiration from it. Even though what you do, may look small, but when God touches it, that can be the greatest shrub in the world that makes many other people abundant. Doing our best in our given situation. That is the attitude of planting the Kingdom of God. Let us plant the Kingdom of God daily in our daily lives.