

St. Timothy Presbyterian Church



IDENTITY

Rev. In Kee Kim

2014 - 2018

Sermons

Table of Contents

Identity and Temptation.....	3
He Withdrew Himself to the Mountains	8
Reason to Live.....	13
You Are Not an Orphan.....	19
Do Not Be Conformed to This World	24
Distorted Image	30
Being Humble and Being Humbled.....	34
Journey of Being Alone	38
Good Life.....	45
Amazing Grace.....	50
Life is Choice	55
You are the Rock	60
Serving is Living	64
Path of Life.....	70
A Ray of Light.....	75
Three Qualities of a Meaningful Life	80
Imitators of God.....	86
Living With Urgency.....	90
Way of Life.....	96
Foolishness and Greed	100

Identity and Temptation

February 22, 2015

Mark 1:9-13

Jesus' Five Milestones

There are five major milestones in Jesus' life. Those were baptism, transfiguration, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. These are the five major events that happened in Jesus' life. We saw the transfiguration last Sunday when we reflected that spiritual experience on the mountain top is good, but it is not enough to deal with life's challenges. So we should ask God not only to give us a wonderful spiritual experience but also at the same time, equip us and empower us to be able to deal with the daily challenges of our lives. So that's what we reflected on. Today, we are looking at Jesus' baptism story, which is another milestone of Jesus' life. And then we see a similar thing going on in this story, as a story of transfiguration. In transfiguration, the disciples saw Moses and Elijah from heaven they earth the voice. But in Jesus' baptism they saw heaven torn apart, the spirit descended like a dove.

And then there was a voice: You are my son, the beloved. With you, I am well pleased. It's a wonderful scene. They experienced a heavenly experience. So wonderful. But right after, the spirit who descended on Jesus for like a dove, now with violent power and force, drove Jesus out into the wilderness to be tempted. I mean, they are short passages, Mark just put these two together and he even doesn't talk about temptation, the content of temptation. So, that's why I like Mark, one of my favourite books, but it is short and precise, to the point, but it has a powerful message. It is the gospel that was written first, before Matthew and Mark, and then he describes a right there that when Jesus was experiencing heaven and as soon immediately Jesus was thrown into the wilderness, in the reality of temptation, and then I realized that that's our life. That is my life and that's your life. When you praise, you feel like you're in a different world. You experience the holiness and the presence of God and everything. As soon as you walk out of this sanctuary, we are faced with temptation of the world. In your everyday living, you are faced with the reality of temptation.

Life is a mix of the good and bad. You cannot always expect the good. You won't always stay on the good. You won't always experience inspiration in your lives and many times you only experience the dark reality of temptation and challenges and difficulties and hardships, and I was thinking about what is temptation? What is the basic core meaning of temptation? Is temptation the power to make you do what you're not supposed to do? Is that what temptation is? A power to make it do what you're not supposed to do?

Life's Temptations

You're on a diet and there's a delicious pizza right in front of you, especially at 11 at night. Should I eat this, or not? Oh my goodness, right here, I can smell it. I can just take a small slice. Pizza is your temptation. You've decided to do exercise every morning. You'd get up, "Aw, it's too cold! I don't want to go out and walk or run or anything. I just want more sleep. One more hour of sleep.". Sleep is your temptation. It is a power to make you do or you're not supposed to. Mark does not describe the details of Jesus' temptation, but Matthew and Luke do. Do you know the famous story of Jesus' temptation in Matthew and Luke? Satan told Jesus to turn the bread into stone, and then he took him to the temple and said.. "Why don't you throw yourself off?". Nothing worked, so he took him to the high mountain and showed him the whole, and he said I'll give you this if you bow to me. That was the temptation that Jesus had. And then I read a few times and then I realized that you nothing to do with the power to do what you're not supposed. Jesus fed 5,000 with only five loaves of bread and two fish. So Jesus could have easily turned the stone into bread. So it has nothing to do with the power to make you do what you're not supposed to do. Then what is temptation? And as I read those temptations again and again, one statement, one phrase kind of jumped out at me and that was say to kept asking Jesus: if you are the son of God. That comes up every time. Satan wanted Jesus to prove himself that he was truly the son of God.

Jesus' Identity

That gave me insight or a clue to understanding the reality of temptation. I've learned that temptation is basically questioning our basic identity. Temptation is questioning my basic identity, who I am, who we are. What

was Jesus' biggest temptation? Jesus' greatest temptation was the cross. Cross was his last and final and the greatest temptation. When he was upon the cross, the people ridiculed him, saying: If you are truly the Messiah, why don't you save yourself? If you're really the son of God, why don't you show to the whole world they you can do that? Why don't you just come down save yourself? You save others, why not just save yourself? Show it! Prove it! About who you are! Let me read an exact quotation: He saved others. He could not save himself, let the Messiah, the king of Israel come down from the cross now so that we may see, and believe. As I read the scripture, Jesus did not do anything to prove himself. He was silent, quiet and he breathed his last breath. That's it. Finished. Jesus did not say "Hey! I can do it!".

He didn't do that. He just quietly died. Strangely after he died, a centurion, seeing all that he said, he said: he was truly the son of God. A centurion. Jesus' identity was identified by a centurion. Jesus did not do anything to improve himself.

Jesus' identity was not what he claimed or what he achieved. Jesus' identity was declared by God and the centurion recognized Jesus' identity. That makes me think. What is my identity? Is my identity what I claim or what I achieve? If my identity is what I claim or what I achieve, I would be living a very tiring life. I'll be always tired, always having to prove myself to other people. "Hey guys, see, this is who I am.". If I cannot do it, I may even force it. I'm may even disguise myself and deceive others. Whatever it is, I want people to see me THIS way. In life, sometimes our identities are attacked. Who we are is attacked. We experience a situation where we feel like we are nobody, worthless, ugly, and undesirable. These days, I don't even want to look at my mirror. "Gosh, when did you get so old?". I don't want even want to have a picture taken. I think "What happened to your hair?". And I say to myself, I got to take care of my hair, before I stand up in front of people and talk. We are scared of feeling like that. So we tried to prove ourselves in whatever we do. You want to define who we are. We are smart, funny, powerful, we have attractive, religious, we're special!

Wow. That's tiring. Especially if you're not smart, and you are pretending to be smart. That will get really tiring. Soon our harsh reality hits us, and makes us feel that we cannot hold on to what we like to define ourselves

with any longer, and we feel uncomfortable with the feeling that we are losing the grip on our lives. My friends, when you're in the moment of trial and temptation, if you can recognize that all the identities that you like to paint yourself with are false identities. If you can recognize that it in the hour of temptation and trial, then you will come out of temptation stronger, bigger, greater. But if you don't recognize that even in your temptation and trial, it will come out smaller and more miserable. At the baptism, God declared that Jesus was the son of God. That was God's declaration. It was not something Jesus achieved or Jesus had to prove. The identity of Jesus was the gift of God, Hallelujah. Your identity is God's gift. You are a child of God. You are sons and daughters of God. That's a gift That's what God gave you. That's not something that you achieved.

God's Gift of Identity

When we go through difficult times, sometimes we wonder about who we are. We have doubts about who we are and what we can do. We lose sometimes confidence about ourselves, but let us not forget, that you are the beloved sons and daughters of God, and that doesn't change. That doesn't change. This is what Isaiah says: But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. Who's are you? You are God's. Our identities are not what our circumstances gave to us. Your achievements did not give you your identity. You identity is basically God's gift for you. Our identities are not what we made up arbitrarily, but it's God's gift, and that never changes, so we need to continuously and constantly go back to that basic identity and starting from there, all other small identities just come and go. The most important identity that you need to hold on to is that you are God's precious child. It was a busy day yesterday. After early morning prayer at 6:30, we had a session meeting at 8:00, and 9:30 we had BOM, and at 12:00 there was a wedding. After the wedding, everybody left. I was all alone in this church, in my office, and all of a sudden, this question came to me: Can you do it? Can you do what you want to do? Or is it unrealistic fantasy or dream. I lost all confidence. I even lost the taste for ministry for the moment. Do it over, and over, but no change. And then I went back to that basic identity. I am God's precious child and God has called me and God called me to persevere, to continue. When I went back to the basic identity again, I

could have confidence and then I finished the sermon yesterday. And I finished the sermon five minutes before the reception.

When you face challenges of your life, when your identities, crushed, demolished, whatever that may be, as a musician or as a professional, whatever it is, when that is crushed, there is a stronger identity underneath: that you are a precious child of God. Go back to that and you can build yourself back again.

He Withdrew Himself to the Mountains

March 15, 2015

John 6:4-15

True Leadership

This phrase catches my eyes: “When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself”

Think about that. This one sentence sums it up. It summarizes what kind of leader we have, and I’m very proud of the kind of leader that we have.

Jesus Christ showed what true leadership, what a true life should be like. Our leader is not easily influenced by other people’s reactions about him. He did not seek other people’s attention. And I like that strength. I like that in people. People who seek attention, they show the weakness of people, but our leader, Jesus Christ did not seek attention from people. And that showed confidence and strength. Little kids, they like attention. But as you grow and mature, as you get older, you don’t need that attention anymore. You’re so confident with yourself that you don’t need to seek attention from people and our lord, Jesus Christ, showed that strength so well.

There is an ordination prayer that is used for ministers. So whenever we ordain people to enter into ministry, there is a prayer that we always use. My favourite part, says: “Let him or her not easily be puffed up by the praise of others, nor easily, too depressed by the blame of others.” I love that part. In ministry, you’re always working with people, and you try to lift up yourself. And then with your charisma and with your popularity, you try to do ministry. And when you get blamed for ministry sometimes get easily depressed or we get easily popped up, but instead of doing that, you do your own thing. And I like that part of the prayer, and that prayer shouldn’t only be for ministers, but for all of us.

A Humble God

When I studied Jesus, being humble is a very strong trait. Jesus was always surrounded by people, but he was not easily influenced by them. Whenever he did something, he didn’t use it to bring attention to himself. I

think people are crazy about Jesus. I think people were really mesmerized by his charisma of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even into today's story where Jesus manipulated the boys' lunch of with five loaves of bread and two fish. I don't know exactly how he did it, but somehow he fed 5,000 people. During that time, they only counted men in that number, so that 5,000 people meant about 10,000-15,000, it could even have been 20,000 people there. And then he fed that many people with five loaves of bread and two fish. Wouldn't you be crazy about Jesus after experiencing that? "Wow, what a miracle!" And Jesus drove them into a frenzy. They were in a fantasy when they were with Jesus! Jesus-mania. You remember Beatlemania, right? Some women even fainted. These people were crazy about the Beatles. People were like, "I love Ringo Starr, please stay with us forever!" I think Jesus-mania was 10,000 times better than that. He just fed 5,000 people with two fish and five loaves of bread. But amazingly, Jesus was not affected by people's reaction. I think the greater miracle is not to feed 5,000 people. The greater miracle was that Jesus was not affected by the people.

When people were crazy about him and wanted to force him to be their king. Jesus decided to be by himself in the mountains, most likely to pray. He didn't really care about what people showed him. He simply retreated into the mountains.

That shows me the character of Jesus. He wanted to be alone. He didn't want to be influenced by other people's reactions. And the next day, he went about doing the same thing as usual: teaching, healing and guiding them. The people were looking for Jesus because Jesus went to the mountain, and they were looking for Jesus, but they couldn't find Jesus anywhere! So they spent all night looking for Jesus, and finally the next day, they found Jesus. They came to Jesus and the same crowd gathered together again. They wanted more miracles. They wanted more excitement. They wanted more from him, and then, Jesus teaching them about the meaning of the miracle he just performed the day before. In teaching, Jesus said this; "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." It is very difficult to understand. Even now, it's hard to listen to, however we have the sacrament so we know its message is not literally, but think about the first time people heard this message. Eat the flesh and drink blood? Unless you

do that, you have no life in you? The people did not expect that kind of message at all. They wanted more miracles. They wanted more exciting messages, but Jesus' teaching was weird. Eating flesh? Drinking blood? They didn't get it, so this is what they said: "This teaching is difficult, who can accept it?" I think Jesus already knew their reaction before he said it. He knew that they will respond to him in this way when they hear the message. If Jesus was looking for popularity, fame, then he would not have said these kinds of things. He would have toned down the message so that he could get more attention from people, and with the people's power, he could do whatever he wanted to do. But when he said this, he knew that people will not like it, but he said it anyways. Immediately, the people lost their appetite for Jesus. They were deeply disappointed with Jesus, and this is what John said: "What happened after Jesus said this message, because of this, many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him." So Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?"

Leader for the People

They did not want to go. They did not want to follow Jesus any longer. They all left. Think about the energy and power. Let's say 10,000 people are here, and they are mesmerized with Jesus' message and Jesus' miracle. They all decide to follow him and they think that he is the greatest. "You have to be king!". "You have to lead us and guide us!". But Jesus said just one word, and everybody left. He was all alone with 12 disciples. Sounds like only 12 disciples were there. And then Jesus asks, "Do you want to leave too?" And then Peter said: "You have some words of life, where can we go?" And Peter always says the right thing at the right moment. I think Jesus must have loved Peter. That's what Jesus wanted to hear! I think it would be very easy to do ministry with Peter. I think Jesus knew the crowd very well. He was not fooled by the crowd. Just because people left him. He did not let that into his head. I like that.

What if Jesus really entertained the idea of people wanting to make him king and all that? What if Jesus actually took that seriously? The next day he would've been a king without his people. If Jesus said the same thing,

they all would have left. What kind of a king is that? A king without anyone who follows him?

Temptation

In the Gospel of John, is there a temptation story? Matthew, Mark and Luke have temptation story, three temptations stories we know. But in John, we don't have a temptation story. But this particular story is different, John describes three temptations and this is the last temptation. The last temptation is Satan took Jesus up on the mountain and showed the whole world, and said "I will give you this". In other words, I'll make you a king. "If you follow, if you bow to me, I'll give you everything." Jesus resisted that temptation, the temptation to be the greatest. Jesus was not fooled by the people's reaction towards him. When people shouted "Hosanna", Jesus let them but he was not pleased. He was not happy with the praise. He knew that soon, they will desert him. When people said, "Crucify him! Crucify!", Jesus just let them, but he was not overly disappointed or angry. In that sense, Jesus was truly free, Jesus was free from people's evaluations, people's expectations, people's reclamation, and people's attention. True righteousness is not something we achieve.

He didn't get his identity from people. He knew his own identity. Jesus is our king, but Jesus did not become our king because WE made him our king. Jesus did not beg them to make him their king. Jesus did not perform miracles so that he could become a superstar and people might desire and admire him. Jesus did not want to be a hero. Jesus did not come to this world to become a hero. So in Mark, whenever he did a miracle, he said not to tell anyone. We don't need to be important people in other people's eyes. We are already precious as we are. Jesus was rejected, abandoned and ridiculed by people, but it was okay to him. They did not want to make him king anymore. They mocked him. They wanted the powerless king to be arrested, punished and executed. It was alright for Jesus, because he knew very well that preciousness would not change. He knew that people cannot make a king nor can the people make him a criminal. That is what the crowd does.

The Journey

One day they will make you a king, the very next day they leave you and make you a criminal. Jesus did not become our king because we chose him. Jesus became our king because of his sacrificial love for us. Jesus, our leader, is the King of love. People are hungry for attention and recognition. They will sacrifice many things just so they can get praise from people and become an important person. Our Lord Jesus did not seek attention. Our Lord Jesus did not rule by the power, our Lord Jesus ruled our hearts by his love, and Jesus wants us to follow in his footsteps. Instead of going out to receive people's praise and admiration, we withdraw to the mountain by ourselves as did our Lord Jesus. There in that mountain, we will meet God. That's our journey. Our journey, is a journey into our own mountain where we meet God alone. That should be our lifestyle. Instead of seeking attention from people and enjoying the power of people's admiration, we see God alone in our own mountain of prayer and that is the confidence. When you're free from people, you can be quite creative.

All the artists, all the great people in history, they were different than the people of their generation and they would not conform to people's expectations. They did their own thing, overcoming people's admiration and recognition. So during that time, they might have suffered, but they created tremendous artistic work because they went their own way. Instead of always trying to get attention and recognition from people, we go our own way. In that way, we can do what God wants us to do. Be creative in your own mountain. Find your own calling. What you want to do with your lives? Do not worry about what people say about you. Do your own thing. Find your own calling and live that. That is courage and strength, and that is what Jesus Christ, our Lord, showed us what a true authentic life is all about. We don't want to just copy other people's lives just because people accept and approve of it. We want to live our own lives; our own authentic life that gives you true happiness, joy and meaningfulness. That is a stronger life, and that is a spiritual life.

Reason to Live

May 22, 2015

John 12:20-33

The Grain Must Die for the Fruit to Live

John. 12, 24 is one of my favorite scripture passages. Very truly, I tell you, unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit, meditate on it. It is a core of what we believe. It is one of the very, very famous passages of Jesus. I think one of the most insightful passages we need to remember, and then keep it in our heart. So if you can memorize, the scripture passage, I think that will be very much helpful, you don't have to memorize them word by word, but if a seed we made this as a single seed, then it doesn't bear fruit, but if it falls on the ground and dies, it bears fruit. So natural. It is truth about the nature.

Truth of Life

At the same time, Jesus saying that, that natural truth, it's also the truth of life. That's what life is all about. If your life just remain as your own individual seed, then it would just remain as a seed, but when you live your life, giving away your life and not only your blessed, but that seed will not remain as a seed, but it will bear fruit that benefits not only you, but also others. Well, what a wonderful truth that Jesus taught us. That is what life is supposed to be; full, fruitful life. Life that's not fruitful, It's a meaningless existence. If that fruit tree does not bear fruit, what good is a fruit tree? Fruit trees bear fruit, and you're supposed to bear the fruit. So we do believe that that is true. We do believe that is how we should live our lives.

What is a Fruitful Life?

We should bear fruits, you know, and then we believe that it is very important for our existence. I like to reflect with you together; What is fruitful life? How can we, how do we, how can we define a fruitful life? When can you say that you are living a fruitful life? That is something that I'm going to

explore with him together, but I don't want to give you common sense. I don't want to give my individual opinion. I think the most important guidance for our life is in the scripture and the teachings of Jesus Christ. What does Jesus tell us about fruitful life that's from today's passage? That's what I'm going to reflect with you today. Then first thing that I want to kind of clarify is that being fruitful and successful are two different things.

Successful Life Versus Fruitful Life

Fruitful life and successful life are two different things. The reason I'm saying that is because a lot of people, as soon as they hear about fruitful life, they're thinking about a successful life, and a lot of people are confused with these two concepts, but I do believe that fruitful life and successful life are two different things. Being successful is what looks on the surface. It can be measured in number, it is quantifiable, if you have \$10,000,000 in your bank account you are successful very much, and if you have several degrees of phds in different in fields, then you are successful. If you win a Nobel prize then you're successful, and if your child plays in NHL, then you can say that you are successful. I mean, these are great things, but being fruitful is different. Being fruitful is different for everybody.

We cannot compare one person's fruitfulness with another person's fruitfulness. It's like comparing apples and oranges. Being fruitful it's different for each person, it's not something that everybody admires. You're fruitful in your own way. I'm going to explain to you, you don't need to have \$10,000,000 in your bank account to be fruitful. You don't need to have several degrees to be fruitful. You don't need to win the Nobel prize to live a fruitful life and you. You don't need to have a child, who plays in the NHL to say that you're living a fruitful life, so I hope that I have a fruitful life too. Fruitfulness cannot be measured in number. Being fruitful is to do with your existence. Being fruitful to me, it's to have a sense of existence. Fuller sense of existence. What does that mean? Fuller sense of existence? How does one live a fuller sense of existence? Having a fuller sense of existence has a character. I think from the scripture that Jesus told us, having a fuller sense of existence is to have a clear purpose in mind. To have a fuller sense of existence means to have a clear sense of purpose of their life. Ask yourself, why are you doing what you're doing? Why are you doing what you're doing? Do you have clear sense of purpose for what

you're doing? What do you want to do with your life? What do you want to do.

Comfortability with Life

in KSM Service, in the morning a young man actually came to our service. A young man came for his first time, he came from St. John's Newfoundland, he finished law school there and he came to our service and then he came actually to do a bar exam, so a few days later, he told me after the service that he came to me, you really gave me, you know, thought to really think about why am I doing, what I am doing? I am really thinking about why did I come all the way to Toronto to go to do the bar exam? And then what do I want to do? Why are you doing what you're doing? Do you have a clear answer to that? If you do, you have fuller sense of the existence. If you don't know why you're doing what you're doing, then we need to think about, what are we doing with our life? It has to do with how comfortable your life is right now, to know how comfortable you are with being comfortable with God.

Being comfortable. Being It's not comfortable. Can Not be a purpose. The purpose of my life. Thinking about the ultimate purpose of my life is what being a human being is all about. We human beings think about those things. What is the ultimate purpose of my life? I had a dog. Her name was Kimmy. I miss her a lot. Every night I come home and play with her- it was just great. Unfortunately, the insanity last year I had to put her to sleep, when I look at her, cute and everything, but I don't think she thinks much about "What's my life?". You know when she's hungry, she barks, when she eats food she sleeps after that, she doesn't think about what is the purpose of my life? Oh, that's a dog and we're not a dog. Even if we have a comfortable abundant food, what do you think about? What is the purpose of my life? We cannot just be satisfied with all the comfort that I have secured for myself because I am a human being. You may have a difficult time financially and personally. You can have a sense of purpose for your life. When you have clear sense of purpose of your life that sets the direction of your life. If you don't have a clear sense of purpose, then your life goes back and forth. Having a clear sense of purpose of life sets the direction of your life,

Jesus Struggles With a Reason to Live

you look into the scripture passage, the second part of scripture passage shows Jesus' agony. In the first part Jesus talks about life that bears fruit, but in the second part Jesus talks about agony. Let's look at this. The first part is very true I tell you, there's a grain of wheat falls into the Earth we made, it's just a single grain, but if it dies, it bears fruit. It's about fruitful life. It is important to have fruitful life. In the second part Jesus says "now my soul is troubled and what should I say? Father save me from this hour. Now, it is for this reason that I've come this hour.

I was thinking about how difficult it must have been for Jesus to say prayer like that. Save me from this hour, just because he doesn't have job. Just because he doesn't have money, or he's hungry. I don't think he would say things like that, but it must have. He must have gone through tremendous pain and agony to even pray that; save me from the sorrow, the son of God. It must have been very, very difficult for him, I don't think that I realized is that Jesus is exactly same as us. Jesus felt exactly the same thing as we felt. When he is in certain situation, he felt exactly the same as any other human being would have felt. He felt the pain. He felt the fear. Jesus Christ, son of God as is not immune to everything that we felt, every single thing that we felt. His life at that moment was far from being comfortable. That's why verse 27, he said, "my soul is troubled and save me father from this hour." No, it is for this reason, and I had to come to this. This passage is this true? More important than diamond. hear it, memorize because it describes the inner world of Jesus Christ. Not just what Jesus did on the surface, but what Jesus went through, in his heart, in his soul.

What do you find? You find that his soul was trouble? Why was he troubled? Because of his understanding of the coming of his own death. In verse 23, he said, "The hour has come for the son of man to be glorified.". To be glorified does not mean that now I'm going to have a good life. What does that mean? Time to be glorified as in time to die. Jesus saying theoretically it is time to die. My time has come to a time to die. That's why his soul was troubled and in that trouble. So he said, save me from this hour, which is a natural reaction for any human being. What would you pray that prayer? No. Tonight we have a funeral, a few days ago I visited an elder Kevin's father, grandfather. And he knew that his time had come, when I recited the scripture was nodding and he was in tears. He knew his final hour was coming very close, and I didn't know that this would come

this fast. And after a few days, I got a call at 12:30 or 33 in the morning. So I visited the hospital, by that time he passed away. Last hour of a person, Jesus went through that, father save me from this hour.

If You Have a Reason to Die for, You Have a Reason to Live

Something amazing about that passage, is that, This is what he said, right after saying, “save me from this hour.” As soon as he said that, he said “No!, it’s for this reason, I came”. He said no, he felt the same pain as we did, but immediately after that he said “No! For this reason I came.” What does that tell us? He had a clear reason to die. He had clear reason for which he came. Jesus had clear reason to live. He did not live just because he still had breaths left for him. He lived because she had a reason to live, and a reason to die. If you have reason to die for, you have reason to live. If you have reason to die for, you have a reason to live, do you have anything to die for? then you have a clear reason to live. Oh, there’s nothing for me to die for, then there’s no clear reason to live

Eternally Love Your Life

Last week, my cousin came from China, he has a missionary in China. About three years ago he had a heart attack in Asia. He is younger, three years younger than me and he had a heart attack in Asia, Southeast Asia. There was no hospital but somehow, they found a clinic and he was hospitalized and he survived. So he got a bypass surgery a few days later, so he had a heart problem. And so I asked him, “so how are you doing? How’s your heart, how’s your health? He said “Hyung, I don’t know”. I said “you don’t want to go to a hospital?”. He said “you know, you know, when I go to the hospital they told me not to go where I have to go because the place I go to, there’s no clinic, there’s nothing in it. They are prohibited from going there. So I have to choose, do I go there or do I listen to a doctor? So I chose to go there to so I don’t listen to the doctor”. He had a clear reason to die for, and I believe he has a clear reason to the reason to live. If you have reason to live, then your existence is fruitful existence. It is fruitful existence, that was what Jesus meant when he said, “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a simple grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”. After that Jesus said this, “those who love their life, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” In the word hate is not emotional discussed feeling. You know there’s a

Jewish expression, I love this more than that. And you say, I love this and I hate that. That's what it means, it means simply letting go. Let me rephrase it in this way, for you to understand better. Those who love comfort of life, will lose the true essence of life, and those who give up their comfort of the reason to live, they will find eternal life.

Find Your Reason to Die

I realized that the greatest temptations of North American people are facing is to be secure. Safety and security, In the meanwhile, we lost the reason to live. We're so busy securing our own future and safety, in the meantime we lost the reason to live. I think that is a greatest temptation We North Americans are going through. Fruitful life is not merely existing, fruitful life is to live with a clear reason to live. God gave everyone a different reason. So we cannot compare. We can tell other people how, how they should live, but everybody's different, but everybody needs to have clear reason to live. We cannot compare it. We have our own cross to carry. Olivia, you are conducting this choir, that's your reason to live. I have reason to preach the gospel, that's my reason to live. We have different purposes, but we give our whole life for it. In that sense, we are the same. Everybody has different reasons to live, that reason doesn't have to be so gigantic, so admirable that everyone admires it, we don't need to be that. You don't need to have that. It is simply to do with why? The reason to live is simply to do with who I am, so if we don't find a reason to live, that means we lose the integrity of who we are.

Then we'll live the way others want us to live. I don't want to live the way others want me to live. I'm looking to find my own reason to live. No matter how insignificant that may be, no matter how small that may be, that is life, that is authentic existence. I don't want to follow other people's footsteps. I want my own path. That's my journey and that's your journey, why do you live? Why do you live? To make money? To be famous? To raise your children? To have comfort of life? Why do you live? We have to find it, once we find it, then life will be gushing forth from the bottom of my heart, and that life will bless us, and that life overflows and blesses others, that is what fruitful life is all about.

You Are Not an Orphan

May 3, 2015

John 14:15-21

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

Embrace All of Life

At every Korean session meeting, we have training. I had to train them with a book by Henri Nouwen. The book is called “A Spirituality of Living”. Before the session meeting, for about 30 minutes, we talk about the spirituality of being an elder and leading the congregation. Hopefully I will do that with the English-speaking congregation too. And from that book, this phrase caught my attention, and this is what Henri Nouwen said, “Jesus calls us to gratitude. He calls us to recognize that gladness and sadness are never separate. That joy and sorrow really belong together, and that mourning and dancing are part of the same movement. How true that is about our life. Our life is a combination of all this. If you demand that only good things should happen in your life, then it will be pretty difficult for you to live with gratitude.

You wish that this will happen, but not all the time that happens. But if you demand that, that should happen all the time, then it will be pretty difficult, to live with gratitude. Knowingly and unknowingly, you’ll build some kind of resentment within you. So I see a lot of people living with some kind of resentment with them. They don’t really know that they have this resentment within them, but when the situation arises, then you realize,

how come I have so much resentment? That resentment was unconsciously accumulated and built up within you. So if you demand that life should be in one way, whether you like it or not, you will most likely build and accumulate some kind of resentment. Life is a mixture of good memories and regrets, love and disappointments, joy and sadness. If we cannot accept this fact of life, we will have a hard time living meaningfully in this world.

Gratitude is to embrace all of life. That's what gratitude is. Gratitude is to embrace all of life, the good and the bad, the joyful and the painful, the victory and the defeat. Gratitude, if you don't embrace all of your life, gratitude is not possible. This is what Saint Paul said, "in any and all circumstances, I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry and of having plenty and of being in need." In all circumstances. In other words, he learned the secret of embracing all of life. He had a secret of embracing all circumstances. That's why he could say be joyful always. That's why he said, give thanks in all circumstances because he learned the secret of being able to embrace all of life, and then right after that, after this passage, this is what he said, this is his secret. "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." I can do all things through him who strengthens me. In other words, I can embrace all of life through him who strengthens me. That was Paul's secret. So then gratitude is not a psychological phenomena. Gratitude is a spiritual thing. If you don't have God through whom you can do all things, then gratitude is not possible.

When we have God within us, fully within us, who strengthens me, then we can embrace all of life. Not just the good things that we like to cherish, but bad things that we don't want. That is where deep gratitude comes from. In today's passage, Jesus promised I will not leave you orphaned. I will not leave you orphaned. He will never leave us alone. That is Jesus' promise. In your darkest moment, Jesus will not leave you alone. That is Jesus' promise to you. No matter what circumstances you may go through in your life, Jesus will never leave you alone. Jesus lived a very short time here on earth, and after that he left us. Thirty three years. He left us, he said, I'll never leave you alone, and then he sent the Holy Spirit to us, and this was what Jesus said, "and I will ask the father and he will give you another advocate (that means the Holy Spirit) to be with you forever. This is the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him

nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you and he'll be in you." You are not alone. The spirit is within you. In your life circumstances, sometimes you'll experience a lot of bad things that you don't want, but even in that moment, Jesus will be with you.

You are not Alone

Often when life's tragedy hits us, suffering hits us, difficulties hits us, you're scared and you're not quite sure about the uncertainties of the future. But you know what? What is the most common emotion people experience when they were hit by tragedy? Deep loneliness, that's what they experience. When life's hardships hits us, we feel alone. We feel like we're abandoned. In that deep loneliness, we feel that we are abandoned, all by ourselves. When Jesus Christ was on the cross, he said, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Jesus is not crying out. Jesus is not asking why God has abandoned him, but he was expressing the deep loneliness that any human being will experience when they go through suffering and hardship.

We feel like nobody seems to care. We feel like nobody seems to understand the deep pain we go through, and we feel like nobody can walk along with me in this dark path. "I'm all alone who has to go through this." We become sad, lonely, and later even angry. When things are good, you enjoy the companionship, but when deep darkness and pain hit us, we realized the limit of the companionship, limit of what the companionship can offer to us. Ultimately nobody can help, we realize. That's reality, that's when we feel alone. Not only do you feel alone, you're all by yourself, but you know what you also experience? You understand that you're not strong enough to be able to go through this all by yourself and you feel alone so you feel so helpless. You feel so alone, but you also know that you are not strong enough to be able to go through all that on your own.

That's when your spirituality becomes really important, not religiousness. Spirituality, deep connectedness with God. That's when the spirituality kicks in. Until then, you don't even know what spirituality does, but when you experience this, then spirituality kicks in and then you realize how important it is. Depending on whether you can believe that the spirit is within you or not, the results are quite different; either you can stand tall or collapse. You know one thing good about experiencing this deep loneliness

is that when you experience this deep loneliness, that's when you can meet God. You can only meet God when you're alone. When you're always with other people, you cannot meet God, but when you experience that deep existential loneliness, the feeling that you're all by yourself, that's when God comes in. That's God's attribute. God is strange. When we are broken and totally vulnerable, God comes, appears to us when things are all right, somehow God disappears, but when we go through that hardship and difficulty, God's slowly comes in and then you see God. So one thing good about feeling this deep loneliness is that you can experience and meet God in a real way.

When everything goes alright, we don't feel alone. We feel right in with the people around us. Well, when we go through pain, we experience loneliness, and we feel like an orphan, Henri Nouwen said, "God is hidden in our pain." So only when you go into pain, you find God. God is hidden in our pain. It is so true. When you feel like you are orphan, that's when you realize that you're not an orphan. When you don't feel like an orphan, then you don't even know that you're not an orphan, but when you feel like I'm an orphan, that's when you realize that you are not an orphan. You're not alone because you meet God. You strongly feel that "I'm not an orphan. God is with me."

Trust in God

My friends, you have two choices. When life's tragedy and hardships hit you, are you going to respond with resentment and become cynical, or are you going to search for God who is hidden in your pain? If you hold onto your pride, then you will build resentment, but if you let go of your pride and hold onto humility, then you'll be able to search for God, hidden in your pain. When you're holding onto your pride, that will destroy you and your life will be diminished, but when you hold on to God within you, then you will be saved and life will be enriched. I know some of you went through tremendous suffering. You have a choice, which one are you going to hold onto? Life's journey is not possible without feeling deep loneliness. That's very much part of the real journey. Ultimately in that journey, you have to walk alone.

You have no choice but to do that. That's what spiritual journey is all about. Somehow this year, you will experience difficulties, hardships, and

prejudice in your life. When you encounter them, understand the theme of this year. You are on this journey, spiritual journey. In that journey, you'll encounter both the good and bad, joy and sadness. That's what a journey is. During that journey, you will experience some difficulties and devastation, helplessness and hopelessness, but ultimately that journey will take you to fullness. When God is with us, what is important is trust. Do you trust God is within you or not? When you trust, then it will come alive. You'll come out of it with stronger faith and stronger character. If you hold onto your deep-rooted bitterness, you will fall and you will not be able to get up. Life will be full of complaints, but when you hold onto the spirit within you, then gratitude will start kicking in and then you can embrace all of your life.

Reflection

As we experience the darkness of our lives, how do we respond to it? Maybe we experience failure, loneliness, sense of self-worthlessness. How do we respond? Let us pray that God may give us faith so that we may respond to our situation trusting that the Spirit is within us.

Do Not Be Conformed to This World

May 18, 2015

John 17:11-19

We Do Not Belong to The World

This week I had a particularly difficult time writing a sermon. Sermon writing is not like you craft the writing as you like. A lot of the times what I do is wait for the message to come and it is a little bit different from Bible study. So a lot of times I spend my time reading and reading, reflecting and reflecting and then waiting and waiting. And yesterday, I waited until 11:30 night here at Church and still the message did not come clearly, and this morning at 5:00 I woke up and then meditated on the passage again. Of course I wrote a draft yesterday, but the difficulty about this passage in particular was that we did not belong to the world, Jesus said. When I reflect upon my own congregation including myself, we are so in the world, we are so engaged in the world.

Jesus' Last Prayer

How do I say to people who are so into the world that you do not belong to the world. And that was partly the difficulty about today's passage. Today's passage is Jesus' last prayer on earth. Just before he died, he said this prayer, and then few days later, he would be killed. It was probably the most important prayer because when people die, they say the most important thing; last words on earth, last prayer on earth. Jesus spent three years with the disciples and now he had to say goodbye to them and now they would be left all alone without Jesus. Until now they followed Jesus and just did whatever Jesus told them to do, but this time they had to take the initiative of carrying on the ministry that Jesus began. When Jesus looked at the disciples, they were probably not ready yet, so Jesus was really concerned.

The Twelve Disciples

I'm really thankful that the disciples did not give up. They carried on what Jesus did. That's why we have the gospel, that's why we have good news, and we have salvation. If they said, oh, this is too much, I don't think I can

carry on this ministry. If they gave up there, then Christianity would not have been birthed. It all depended on their shoulders. The twelve disciples, they were the ones, everyone else left Jesus already. Now, the only people that were left were the twelve disciples and they had to carry on, and the task was too much for them. That's why Jesus was concerned for them.

When I read the prayer of Jesus several times, the strong message that came from the prayer was protection. Jesus wanted their protection. When you look at verse 11, "and now I'm no longer in the world", that's what Jesus is saying, "but they are in the world and I'm coming to you, Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me. So that they may be one as we are one". Jesus knew that their life would not be necessarily easy, so he asked for protection. As you know, all the disciples were martyred. The world to them, especially without Jesus was not a comfortable place. The world was hostile to them. Jesus even knew that the world would be hostile to them. This is what Jesus said. "The world has hated them because they did not belong to the world." The world has hated them because they did not belong to the world. Just before that he said they have my word. That's why the world will hate them because they do not belong to the world.

The World is Not For us to Enjoy

At times, as Christians we will have difficult times in this world. It is hard to survive in this world. The world is not necessarily a kind place for us to enjoy. We have to constantly prove ourselves about our worthiness. And sometimes we face problems and they are quite overwhelming. It's like when you go to the ocean the wave comes to you, but not just once, continuously over and over and over again. Sometimes problems come to us like waves, instead of okay, now I've had enough problems, no more. Another problem can come. Life can be quite cruel to us sometimes. We feel like sometimes we are surrounded by helplessness and we have no place to hide or escape.

Often we get disappointed with the world and we get frustrated too. And we realize that it can be quite a cruel place in this world. We do not belong to the world. That was what Jesus said in his prayer. Same phrase twice, verse 14 and verse 16. They do not belong to the world. Just as I do not belong to the world. They do not belong to the world. Just as I do not belong

to the world. It's not a typo. He repeated it intentionally twice in verse 14 and 16, the exact same sentence. I realized that you cannot be too comfortable in this world. This is not our eternal place to stay. We cannot permanently settle here.

My daughter lives in Boston and I ask all the time, so did you make some friends and then, do you go to church or you know, how's your life there? And then basically they were saying, oh you know, just work and home, and work and all, we have no friends still and all that. And then Will said, you know, we're not planning to make many friends here because we're not going to stay here too long. We're gonna come back to Toronto, so we are not really worried about making friends. I said yes. If they're too comfortable there, they won't come. They would like Boston more than Toronto, because Toronto is a better place.

We Do Not Belong Here

This world is not our permanent place to stay. We cannot be too comfortable in this world. The world may have treated you very nicely so far, but never forget that you do not belong here. You will not permanently stay here. Of course, we should not hate the world or despise the world for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son. God loved the world so we should also love the world, but loving the world does not mean that you should completely immerse yourself into the thinking of this world. That's not what loving the world is. you cannot completely attach yourself to the world. While Jesus lived on earth, I think he really enjoyed the world. He had many friends, sinner friends. A lot of them were sinner friends. I think he really, really enjoy the world very much, but I get the sense that he never had a strong attachment to the world. He enjoyed it. He loved it, but he never attached himself all the way to the world. He did not live to stay here or lengthen his stay on earth as long as possible. When you read John, right from the beginning, Jesus always said, my time has not yet come. My time has not yet come. My time has not yet come. He was waiting for his time. His time of death, time of the cross. Jesus always said, my time has not yet come. He loved and enjoyed the world, but he knew soon he would leave the world, and he has no attachment to it.

That is the kind of attitude Jesus had about this world. He lived only 33 years, very short life. You may say what kind of life is that? 33? But that 33

years, were the most meaningful years and they made a profound impact on other people. With only 33 years living on earth, his life made a tremendous impact on people.

Don't be Blinded

It is one thing to love the world and another thing to totally immerse ourselves into the world. Please don't be bought into the thinking of this world. Don't be fooled and don't be blinded. By the pleasure that this world may give you. St. Paul said in his letter to the Romans, for 11 chapters he wrote about the theory of Jesus Christ and salvation eloquently. And from chapter 12 he described how you should live. The first thing that St. Paul said was give your body as a living sacrifice and that is spiritual worship. And then he said this, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good, acceptable, and perfect. When you experience that disappointment, disillusionment with a world do not be so sad. It may be a good reminder that you do not belong here, that you do not belong to the world. Rather, use that as an opportunity to be transformed by the renewing of your minds. Use it as an opportunity to transform yourself then you'll be able to see the perfect and acceptable will of God in your life.

This is what Jesus prayed and this is what I also pray for my congregation. Jesus said in verse 17, sanctify them in the truth. Your word is the truth. Don't be tainted and completely influenced by the world's thinking, by this world, but sanctify yourself with the word of Jesus Christ, because that word is the truth. Immerse yourself into the truth. Sanctify yourself with the truth. Don't be fooled. Don't be blinded. Life is short. You're supposed to find the perfect will of God rather than just enjoying every moment of it.

Not an Aging Theory

People who experienced deep pain in the world, all of a sudden they have a different perspective about the word of God. The word of God is no longer an aging theory. The word of God becomes life to them. I've been with you for many years. I've been in this church since 1992 so I've been in this church for 23 years. I've seen you since some of you were really young, before marriage, while you were in school. For a while. I saw

dedication. I saw a deep passion for the word of God, a deep passion for Jesus, but somehow life carried some of us to a totally different place. We don't have that passion anymore for the word. We used to have it, we used to be so dedicated, but somehow through life experiences, something else started influencing people.

When we go through hard times and difficult times, the word of God becomes living life, not just an ancient theory. Some of them confessed to me without the word. I don't think I could survive my difficult time. They had unimaginable pain, hardships and difficulties, and they come to me and say, the word of God saved me at that time.

Sanctified With the Word of God

If we do not know the word, we'll be lost. Jesus taught the disciples the word. That's why they could survive. Be sanctified with the truth, be sanctified with the word of God. That's the only thing that can sustain you. Don't base your life on good experiences that you have in this world. That will not last too long, and you cannot control that either. The end will be disillusionment and disappointment. Let the word of God transform you. You'll be able to love the world and enjoy the world without being fooled by it. You'll never get lost when you have the living word. You'll find true joy. That's what St. Paul said. He said, rejoice always not only when things are good, rejoice always. He said this in prison without knowing the future of tomorrow. He said, rejoice always. He was sanctified by the truth, so joy becomes a characteristic of his life and that was what Jesus also said today in his prayer. I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. Jesus was leaving, but he wanted disciples to have complete Joy.

The joy the world gives cannot give true joy. The peace the world gives you is temporary joy. The life the world guarantees is a temporary life. The joy, peace, and life that truth guarantees us is for eternity. Don't invest all your time, energy, resources into things that are here for awhile and disappear. Invest all that into eternal things. That was Jesus' prayer for the disciples.

Reflection

Let us think about our lives. Where do we invest all of our time, energy, talents, and resources? Things that are here for a while disappear. Let us really think about what it means to put our lives into things that are eternal.

Distorted Image

January 10, 2016

Scripture Passage Not Available

Ones Image

We all want to live a very good and happy life. That's what God wants for us too. Our God is not a God who's jealous about us having a good time. Our God is not a God who only sees our negative side and makes us feel guilty when we are happy. God is happy. God doesn't want his children to be miserable. Like parents don't want their children to be miserable. You know, we're not jealous when our children are doing very well. In the same way, our God is very happy when his children, we are doing very well, but surprisingly many people have a distorted image of God. I wonder how that got into our consciousness, but we have so many people living with this distorted image. You know, depending on what image you have about yourself, your life will be very different and your life perspective will be different. The distorted image is the image of God who's always angry, fearful and ready to punish us. Somehow we have this nagging thought about God, that God is always not pleased with you, not happy with you and always ready to do some negative things to you. See, I have this distorted image of God. We can never become close to God. How can you become close to a person who's always fearful, critical and negative? You don't want to be around them. You don't want to approach them. In the same way when you have that distorted image about God, you don't want to come close to God. You want to have a safe distance. So you live your life maintaining the safe distance from God. Okay? God, I'll pay my respect, but I don't want to get too much involved either. So instead of loving God, we fear God. A lot of people, their faith is about fearing god rather than a loving God.

We keep up our kind of religious life, but not really life of faith. We have tremendous guilt within us and that guilt assess certain distorted images about God. Then where does this distorted image come from? I was wondering maybe from Sunday school? When you're young with your sensitive ears, your teacher really scares you. If you don't act well or do well, you'll go to hell and hell is like a big fire, then you will forever suffer

there. I don't know maybe you got that from Sunday school or from your fearful parents. If your parents are disciplinary kind of parents, we sometimes get the image of God through our parents because we cannot see God. So they create a certain image of God and everybody creates a certain image of God and then they create the image of God through the image of their parents. Maybe sometimes from the Bible. I mean there are some scary passages in the Bible, so whatever it is, I don't know where that distorted image came to us and ingrained in us. My suspects, my suspicion is that we have created our own distorted image. It's not from a Sunday school teacher, it's not from the Bible, It's not from a parents. We have imposed this distorted image upon ourselves. We are the culprits. We are not 100 percent satisfied with ourselves and we ourselves are the greatest critics and maybe the worst enemy to ourselves. Sometimes we do not live up to our own expectations of ourselves, so when we experienced failures and disappointment about ourselves, the failures confirm that we are not as good as we want to be. Guilt becomes piled up in us.

Accepting Myself and Others

I don't know why we live with such a negative image of ourselves. I don't know why we live with such a deep seeded guilt and this distorted image about ourselves is easily and readily translated into God's attitude towards ourselves. when I cannot accept myself, how can we expect that God will accept me, when I am not pleased with myself? How can we say that God will be pleased with me? God knows me more than I know myself. God knows my deepest secrets and all the dark sides that I don't even know sometimes. We hide as much as possible. Nobody knows, but God will see that and how can God love me? How can it be? This is why you're scared of God? We fear God because he knows what you do when you're alone or in your thoughts sometimes, you think "I don't want anybody to know, I don't want God to know", but God knows. We know that God knows everything about us. We don't think God has such a great image about us and God is not 100 percent pleased with us. We have firm belief in this negative thinking about ourselves and about God. We can never hear the good news that God loves us. This theory, God loves me. That sounds good, but I cannot believe that. Believing in Jesus Christ means that you believe that God loves you. God sent Jesus Christ to us because he loves

us, but we'd never can truly accept that without a doubt. Believing in Christ, it's not really abstract images, You just believe. Believing in Christ means that, "Oh, God loves me that much, that he sent Jesus Christ to us". That's what believing in Christ means.

Zacchaeus

Zacchaeus, all his life lived with this distorted image. He was a tax collector, during that time tax collectors were the lowest of the lowest, the worst in society. Not because they are poor, they are rich. Actually, the scripture says that he was rich, but morally and ethically, they were the lowest of lowest. You don't want to deal with them. Everyone says, "oh, you're a tax collector really?", you don't want to associate with them. Think about what that does to the self image of Zacchaeus. He lived all his life with that distorted image about himself. He didn't want to live with that guilt and that image all the time. So he wanted to be healed somehow. He didn't have a fiscal disease, he didn't have any other problems. He was rich. He didn't have financial problems, he was okay with this right? But he had a problem with this distorted image. So he wanted to be free from that and came to Jesus, not because he has an illness, but because of this bothering thought within himself. He was so short and went up to the tree to see Jesus and you know what? among all those people, Jesus chose Zacchaeus. He noticed Zacchaeus. Nobody really paid attention to this man, but Jesus noticed this man and called him. Choose him, "I'll stay at your house". Among all those people, God chose Zacchaeus to make him a special portion for Jesus to stay at his house. Jesus did not choose him because he was great. Jesus choose him precisely because he thinks that he is not great. Zacchaeus then all of a sudden, realized that I'm a special person. I'm not this or that, I'm a special person, I'm a precious person. When we are free from distorted image, we change. When you feel guilty, you don't change. Zacchaeus changed completely. He restored his image. So what did he do? he said, "half of my position, I'll give to the poor". So he gave half of his position to the poor and if he ripped off anyone, he would pay them back four times. He has changed completely. When we are free from distorted image, we can become free and we can become generous and from self sufficient people we can became generous people.

Forgiving Others

Why can't we forgive other people? because of distorted image. See, if you're confident about your image and somebody criticizes you, whatever, it doesn't bother you that much, but when you have distorted image and then somebody tells you that, then you get really angry, and can never forgive that person. when we are free from the distorted image, then we can be truly free from our selfishness, greed and narcissism. Jesus said two things to follow Jesus Christ. One, deny yourself and the other, take up the cross. Selfless sacrifice. He is talking about Zacchaeus who was able to practice that, not just in theory. In real life he was able to practice that. We are the victims of greed, selfishness and narcissism. I want all of us to be free from that. Faith is not about your feelings. Faith is very concrete. Zacchaeus concretely, was able to give out for the poor. That's salvation. That is evolution, evolution is not just going to Heaven after you die. Salvation is total freedom. To be able to be the self giving people.

Be With God

That is the power of healing. I hope that we may be free from this distorted image. My friends, you are created in God's image. You're not created in that ugly image that you have. You are created in God's image. I hope that we can all believe, that's a fundamental belief that we have to have about ourselves. Then we can build our life upon it. This year you may be free from that distorted image and then actually press on to know God. As long as we have that distorted image, you would run away from God. You will hide from God continuously and you'll catch yourself doing that. People do that in a very sophisticated way, but instead of hiding away, come close to God and get to know God in an intimate way.

Being Humble and Being Humbled

February 21, 2016

Philippians 2:5-11

John 19:1-11

Humility and Sacrifice

These days I reflect on humility and sacrifice. These two words keep coming to me, humility and sacrifice. Partly because we're doing our Philippians study and we know that humility is a very important virtue for Christians.

What It Means to be Humble

What does it mean to be humble? There's a lot of distorted images about being humble, so today I'd like to think together with you what it means to be humble. People misunderstand humility. It is not necessarily self pity. What does humility look like? It is hard to talk about humility in a concrete way because we now question what it looks like when it is in our daily lives. What do humble people look like? Sometimes it's not quite clear. Also, humility is not a quality that modern society values very highly.

Modern society does not look at humility as a very important quality for their lives. They see no useful value in humility. I mean, humility is okay in interpersonal relationships, but how does that make my personal life happy and meaningful? Does humility do anything for that? Confidence? Yeah, we can see confidence is very important. Confidence is more important than humility they say. Being capable? If you are capable in doing things then you can be happy, you can do a lot of things very well. So being capable is more important than humility. Being admired by people? You know, people love you and people admire you, people adore you. That boosts my self esteem, that is really good, so being admired is more important than humility. Being humble? That is a sign of weakness and admitting that we are weak is not necessarily an easy thing to do for modern people. We want to be strong. Modern society recognizes the value of strength. You have to be strong rather than being weak. Humility is a sign of weakness so I don't want to be humble.

We have to ask, is humility or being humble, a sign of failure? Is humility, a trait of weak people? Is humility a natural result of being defeated? "You're not as popular as other people so you have no choice but to be humble. You're not as successful as others so you have no choice but to be humble." Humility is the natural result of being inferior, being defeated, failing?

Jesus Was Not Made Humble

When I read Jesus' life, we know that Jesus is humble and Paul said that Jesus is very humble, but I don't see that kind of weakness in Jesus' life. I don't think Jesus was humble because he failed. To Jesus, humility was not a sign of failure. I don't think Jesus became humble because he was crucified on the cross. "A humiliating death made him humble." I don't think so. It's not that Jesus failed everything in life and had no choice but to be crucified, and as a result he became humble. I don't think that's what we believe about Jesus. Jesus was not made humble. Jesus chose to be humble. Jesus was not made humble. Jesus chose to be humble. Jesus chose to take the cross and Jesus chose to empty himself and Jesus chose to become a servant. That was his choice.

Why? Because that's what big people do. Being humble, that's what big people do. People who see bigger things in life can be humble. Jesus was so big that he didn't have to boast about himself. He had everything so he didn't have to boast about whatever he had. He didn't have to prove himself to the world. Jesus clearly knew who he was, he was the son of God. He didn't have to prove or show to the world who he was. To Jesus, humility was not a sign of failure or defeat, but a sign of greatness. Jesus knew himself very well.

Jesus Lived As He Was

A lot of us depend on other people to tell me who I am. If they love me I must be lovable. If they admire me I must be admirable. They all praise me, I must be good at whatever I do. We always depend on other people to prove who we are or to know who we are. Jesus did not have to depend on other people to tell him who he was. He knew who he was and he simply lived as he was. That's humility. Jesus knew who he was and he simply lived as he was. He didn't live to inspire other people, or to really show

other people who he was. He just simply lived as he was. He didn't have this distorted sense of ego. He didn't have to hide his weaknesses with his bloated ego. We do that all the time. When we have insecurity, when we have inferiority within us, we try to cover it with this bloated sense of ego, but Jesus didn't do that. He didn't seek for people's approval either. That's why he was hated. He didn't seek for people's approval. He was free from that. He was very comfortable with himself and lived comfortably as he was.

Humility is the Power to be Yourself

I realized, humility is the power to be yourself. Humility is the true power to be yourself. It is different from the power the world bestows upon us. It is the power that comes from within. It is not the power other people give me externally. It is the power that comes from within and that is when you know God, when you know his power, that power comes from within, and from that power you can be yourself. That is what humility is. True humility does not beg for the power the world gives because they already have enough power within themselves. True humility does not get sucked into power because it knows true power. True humility does not bow one's head before the power of the world. That's why Jesus was crucified. Because he did not bow his head to the power of the world. He could have sucked up to the power of Pilate and asked for salvation, "save my life." Pilate saw all kinds of people. He crucified so many people so he knew how to scare them. Pilate approached with that power and he tried to scare Jesus. Jesus was not scared. Jesus was not threatened. And then Pilate asked, what kind of person are you? You are different from others. I could scare them! They were begging for their lives from me. You don't do that. So Pilate asked Jesus, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have the power to release you and the power to crucify you, and you refuse to speak to me?" And this is what Jesus said. "You have no power over me unless it has been given to you from above." Jesus saw different power. The power from above. Pilate said Jesus was innocent three times in the scripture. If you know that the person is innocent and you have the power to release, then he should have released Jesus, but ultimately, what does he do? He handed him over. He had no power to release Jesus. He didn't even know that he had no power to do so. Jesus did not at all bow to the

power of Pilate. He was strong. He was not afraid. That is what true humility looks like.

Humility that comes from being humbled, if you're humble because of your situation, because of a failure, that humility can disappear very quickly when the situation disappears. But humility that comes from a clear sense of who he or she is will never disappear. Always the same. Just because you're highly exalted, you will not become proud. Just because you're humbled and crushed, you will not feel miserable, pitiful, and small. Only in humility we can live an authentic life. When we have humility, we will be able to live with confidence in all situations. We can stand tall in all situations. Nobody can make me small. We will not be shaken by how people treat us. In humility we can overcome our conflicts with ourselves and we can be truthful to ourselves and in the end, that is the way to be truthful to God.

As we are comfortable with ourselves we can be comfortable with others too. I wonder whether that is the way to be happy and meaningful. Humility I realized is an essential quality to live a happy and meaningful life. May god bless you with Jesus' humility. Live confidently knowing that Jesus is with you and He called you, and God called you. You are my beloved child. That's all that matters.

Journey of Being Alone

March 20, 2016

Mark 1:1-11

Loneliness is a Silent Killer of Modern Society

Loneliness is a silent killer of modern society. I read a very interesting article on the Globe and mail written by Elizabeth Renzetti and in this article Amy Rokak, a psychologist and lecturer at York University who has been researching on this topic of loneliness for more than three decades. And she said “loneliness has been linked to depression, anxiety, interpersonal hostility, increased vulnerability to health problems, and even to suicide.” So loneliness, is not just loneliness, loneliness is very much connected and related to our health. The same research is done in United States and the director of the University of Chicago, center for cognitive and social neuroscience also says loneliness causes all kinds of health problems such as suppressing the immune system and cardiovascular function. And it increases the amount of stress hormone. And he says these changes in physiology are compounded in ways that may be hastening millions of people to an early grave. We’re talking about millions of people and loneliness they said is as bad as smoking or being obese.

I mean Loneliness has a serious health problems, but thing is, this is quite common. Forty percent of Americans are suffering from loneliness and that figure is doubled in 30 years, twice as many people are lonely now after 30 years. But even though 40 percent are saying they’re lonely they don’t admit it. They feel shameful to say that they are lonely. They never want to admit that they are lonely. Professor Wilcox says for 30 years, I’ve been doing this, and, and they are a readily admitted that they have schizophrenia or they’re depressed and things like that. They could admit it, but not a single person said that they are lonely. But in the course of conversation, they finally admitted that they’re lonely. In other words, many people don’t even know that they are lonely. There’s such a stigma about being lonely, so they don’t want to admit it.

Social Media puts on a Facade to Hide our Loneliness

They don't want to say it but deep inside they feel deep loneliness. We have a very sophisticated, social media like Facebook and yet it does not help a people's loneliness. I mean these days, even though we don't meet physically in cafe or a restaurant or we can meet them through the Internet and Facebook, we can communicate. So we will wonder whether we are more connected with others, but the researchers say that they feel more lonely because of Facebook's and all that It's like Facebook is like a little hungry child looking through the window, of a family having great dinner, making conversation with each other and then saying to himself, "why not me?" Because in Facebook they put all the great things that they do, vacation, exotic vacation, and all the good times that they have. And then people who are lonely see their Facebook.

Jesus Experienced Total Abandonment

Everybody's having a good time, but me, kind of feeling. So the loneliness becomes worse for them. In Today's scripture we see Jesus coming into Jerusalem. It is a celebratory scene. People were ecstatic about Jesus and Jesus popularity was at peak. He was like a celebrity, you know, if he came in modern time and all the flashes everywhere, cameras and every hour and they were so excited about Jesus coming into Jerusalem. Look at what people did. If you go back to scripture, this is what they did. Many people spread their cloaks on the road and others spread leafy branches that they had caught in the field and those who went ahead. And those who followed were shouting, Hosanna blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David. Hosanna in the highest heaven. I mean they took off their clothes and then put it on the road and then they took branches put it on the road and let Jesus please come and walk. And then they were shouting with excitement, "Hosanna you are the king and please come and save us. That kind of atmosphere, ecstatic, celebratory scene. But I was wondering how Jesus might have felt. Would Jesus. Share the same excitement with these, with this crowd. Was Jesus so excited about going into Jerusalem?

I don't think so. Jesus knew clearly that this exciting crowd will soon be scattered and the disciples would runaway in panic and then he will receive rejection, denial, betrayal, and Jesus will see the disappointment in people's faces because Jesus will not do what they expected him to do. So

Jesus knew that they will be very, very disappointed the problems Jesus knew all that as he entered into Jerusalem. I think Jesus felt all alone in the crowd. All alone.

No one was able to sense Jesus, total abandonment or loneliness in the midst of celebration. They were busy celebrating without really seeing what is going on in the heart of Jesus. You know, like, you went to a doctor and they just diagnosed that you have cancer and you have only three months to live and you came home and your family and friends gathered together to throw a surprise birthday party for you and you didn't have a chance yet to tell them what you just heard from doctor. And you have only three months to live and they're celebrating your birthday. You're there, but you feel all alone.

Jesus' sentiment is well captured in the scripture. Scripture is not really writing all Jesus this or that they're just throwing a certain words to capture the mood a verse 11, this is what the scripture says. "Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple and when he had looked around at everything as it was already late, he went out to Bethlehem with the 12." It was late in the evening temple. Usually during the daytime, people come and give sacrifice and pray and all that. In the evening they all leave and so Jesus went into the temple all alone, and he looked around by looking around what would have, what would he have thought? Probably he would have thought about what would happen soon.

The disciples might have been with Jesus physically, but they didn't understand what their teacher, and master was going through. They had no idea what Jesus was thinking or feeling. When I reflect on last week of Jesus' life on earth, this one image comes to my mind, the last week of Jesus' life on earth, being alone. That is the image that comes to my mind. Nobody was able to be with him. He was all alone. It reminds me of the phrase, "we are born alone and die alone." That's true. You're born alone and die alone. As I said a few weeks ago when we reflected on Jesus' suffering in Gethsemane, Jesus was going through tremendous hardships, agony and difficulties and suffering. The disciples fell asleep. Disciples cannot be with Jesus. That was the reality of Jesus' last moment. Being alone. Isn't that our reality? Being alone? No one can understand us completely.

Distractions Does not Get rid of Loneliness

No one can be with us all the way. Deep inside, we are all alone. When we really look at our lives, we are alone. But loneliness and being alone are two different things. Not everybody who's alone is lonely. Jesus was totally alone, but he was not lonely necessarily. All his life he was like that. He went up to the mountain all by himself. He was all alone in the mountain, but he was not lonely. Well we are different. Many of us are scared of being alone because we are scared of facing our loneliness. We constantly have to distract ourselves. We make ourselves surrounded by people and things to do. We make ourselves very busy all the time. We fill up our schedule as though as though that's scheduled might fill up our emptiness. Just because you fill up your schedule, that doesn't mean that you can fill up your emptiness. Distraction does not get rid of our loneliness. It just delays it. You're just playing blind eyes to it. You don't want to think about it. You don't want to deal with it. You just delay it until you have no choice, but to face your own loneliness or aloneness. I mean, I can do that all the times. I can always call friends. I can always do something exciting and I can always do that.

Why? That's escapism. That's running away, I mean are stronger than that. What are we so scared of? I'd rather face loneliness or aloneness rather than continuously filling up with schedule so that I don't think about it. I want to see what loneliness is like. I clearly see it and deal with it rather than glossing over it. I believe that loneliness comes from hollowness, an emptiness inside and realize that this hollowness and emptiness, will never be able to be filled up by making yourself busy or doing many external things. This hollowness and emptiness has to do with who I am and what do I want to do.

Who am I and, What do I want to do?

These two questions are very important questions and we have to always ask ourselves, who am I and what do I want to do? When these questions are not answered, that hollowness and emptiness will continue. It doesn't matter how high you go up. Doesn't matter how many friends you have. It doesn't matter how great time you have in your life. When these two questions are not answered, your hollowness will not be filled up. Who am I and what do I want to do? The problem is the answer does not come

easily. Nor can we find it from books or even life experiences. No. The understanding of who we are and what we really want to do is lifetime journey. It's a lifetime journey, but unfortunately many people don't think about this. They say they are too busy. Just an excuse. You're just making excuses. You just are scared, scared, so deadly scared of facing these questions. We are scared of looking at our hollowness because you will be completely submerged into it because there doesn't seem to be an easy answer, so people don't make time to be unknown and also when they are alone they don't know what to do. Okay, I'm alone. What am I supposed to do? We don't know. Just being alone.

Jesus Knew Exactly Who he Was

I'd rather have a party. I'd rather go out with friends so they always fill up again and again. Sometimes only this terrible loneliness is imposed on us. Once in awhile they never choose to be alone to the journey of understanding of who they are and what they really want to do. But if we take this journey boldly with faith in God our hollowness will not scare us anymore. God exists. God is here, so if we take boldly this faith journey to see our hollowness, then this hollowness will scare us anymore. This hollowness will not create devastating loneliness. Of course, the hollowness will never disappear, will never go away, but you will see God's grace filling up this hollowness. That's reality. As we boldly take that journey, this hollowness is being filled up by God's grace, we are taking the wrong direction. Well, if I do better in career, if I do better with money, if I better with the friends, the relationship, this hollowness will be filled up. No, that's the wrong direction. Our singing group, wrong direction, wrong direction, good name. You're saying that. Let's not do that, right? One thing great about Jesus is that he knew exactly who he was. He knew exactly what he wanted to do. That's the difference. My goodness, when I look at Jesus. That's who he was. He knew exactly who he was and exactly what he wanted to do. If you have courage and boldness and take this journey, then soon you'll enjoy the process. You won't get the result right away, but you'll start enjoying the process of discovering who you are and what you want to do. You start enjoying when you continuously run away, you can never learn to enjoy this process of finding out who you are and what you want to do because Jesus knew clearly who he was and what he wanted to do. That was why he was able to take the last week of total abandonment.

The world abandoned Jesus. Oh my goodness. That's hard. When you're abandoned by the world, that's hard to take. The world abandoned Jesus and he was able to take that because he knew who he was and he knew what he wanted to do. Henri Nouwen said in his book "spirituality of living", that when Jesus was in the mountain, he questioned what did he hear and Nouwen's answer is that he heard this voice. "You are my beloved son." Nouwen said that Jesus must have heard that in the mountain. "You are my beloved son", because that was a voice that he heard right in the beginning of the baptism. I think Nouwen is right. And then Nouwen continued with this knowledge of being the beloved Jesus could walk freely into a world in which he was not treated as the beloved.

That's wisdom because Jesus was so sure that he was beloved. He was able to walk freely into the world where they abandoned Jesus completely. Jesus had a clear sense of who he was, regardless of how the world treated him.

But we are different. We have tremendous pressure to have to prove ourselves to the world. We have to prove our worth. Do you know how great I am? How worthy I am? To our friends, to our parents, to our company, and to even strangers? Do you know how great I am and we mistakenly think then, only then, people say will say that you are great and people love you.

We don't even know how the world's expectations poison us, they poison us. You got to be this kind of person to be loved, so we continuously try to meet that expectation just to be loved, how pathetic we are becoming. We don't even know how this world and this corporate environment enslaves us and poisons us, how we are fooled by the praise of the people around us without even knowing who I am or what I want to do. We cannot continue in this poisonous environment. So this church, including myself, we want to protest against that kind of lifestyle. We don't condone that. We don't approve that as authentic living. We may not be able to get away from this world, but we need to come to our senses to truly see who we are and what we really want to do. As we started looking at who we are. Sometimes we may not like it. What you see, you may not like it, but still we have to continue.

Steve Jobs Anecdote

As I told you, Walter Isaacson's, Steve Jobs, I'm slowly, I'm reading it I'm almost at the end and at the end of his journey, he called Walter Isaacson. And then Walter came to Steve Job's home and then looked at Steve and then it was just bone he was dying. And then Steve said, "you know, I may not be able to read your book when you complete it, but you said a lot of bad things about me, right? And Walter said, yeah, I want to be as honest as possible. And Steve said, good. That's maturity in a way, as we look at ourselves sometimes we may not like who you are, what we are like right now. That does not mean that we should give up. We continuously and courageously pursue this journey of finding true life. God will help us. These days when I look at people around me, both in congregation or outside, I feel this burden, pain. They don't have to live like that, they could live much, much better life, and they deserve better life than that. If we are continuously running away from being alone, we cannot do this. We need to be strong to be alone without being lonely let us humbly and boldly. Take this journey of being alone and in our aloneness, God will speak to us and God will whisper to us and will experience our hollowness slowly being filled with God's grace, that is possible. God created this hollowness so that we could relate to God and that hollowness is to be filled with God's grace.

Good Life

May 15, 2016

Mark 6:6-8

What Makes A Good Life?

Good life. That is something that we need to pursue. You deserve it. You're supposed to live a good life. I mean, we have one life we live. We've got to live a good life, so you need to pursue it, and you deserve it, and you have a right to do so. And God very much wants you to have good life.

At the staff meeting, I told the staff that this week's sermon title is 'good life' and Reverend Sohn said, "it sounds like Good Life fitness." That's the first image that comes to your mind. And I told him that was exactly why I chose that title. Good life. I think that Good Life fitness has captured very well what modern people understand what they think about a good life. When people think about good life, they think about a healthy and active life.

We are obsessed with what we eat and we are very careful about what we eat. It's not just older people these days who are eating healthy food, but a lot of young people are. It's a trend, a lot of young people are into healthy food – it's much more expensive, but they don't mind paying more money for buying expensive food because, you know, "eat better, feel better." And so they have all kinds of theories. Some stores who sell expensive organic food, they do very well. Not just tasty food, but healthy food. People choose to live a healthy life, and food is very important. A lot of health problems come from eating unhealthy food. We are eating and consuming way too much bad food.

I mean, ramen at night is like heaven, but it's not necessarily good for your body. In an elevator on the way down from the exercise room, I happened to listen to these two young Korean men talking. I wasn't intentionally listening to them, but they didn't know that I was Korean, so they were speaking Korean to each other and I just had happened to listen to their conversation. They were talking about body building and they were giving tips to each other. I was quite surprised at how hard they exercise. When I go up there, I run on the treadmill and I say, "Wow, I did so much" and I look at my time – only 20 minutes at most. These guys are staying there

three, four hours for their body. They workout religiously. It is good to exercise... healthy body, healthy mind. It is good to work hard, eat sensibly exercise regularly, and enjoy your life doing things that you enjoy. That's how we define a good life and that's how I'd like to define a good life too. You've got to work hard, you've got to exercise, you've got to eat healthy food and you've got to enjoy whatever you really enjoy doing and that's what I try to do too.

But when I look at those things, what I just described is all about external things. Food, exercise, work, and doing things you enjoy. These are things that we do on the outside, but how about the inside? Also all of these things are about me. It is all about me, and a good life cannot just be all about me. A good life is more than that. A good life is deeper than that... It's not just about me.

The Three Pillars

In today's scripture, people came to God actually complaining. Sometimes we use this passage during Christmas time. You may think that, like a devotional to God, "What do you require of me?" That's how some songs are written and all that, but that's mistaken. Here, the people came to God complaining because God was not very pleased with the Israelites at that time. Because they were very selfish, they were only thinking about themselves, and God was not happy with them. So the prophets rebuked the people, and people responded to God. They said, "What do you want, God? Do you want burnt offerings with calves a year old? Or do you want thousands of rams? No, or do you want ten thousands of rivers of oil? If that is enough, then God, shall I give my first born for my sin? Then you'll be satisfied? What do you want?" That's what they were saying. It wasn't like, "God, what do you require?" like a devotional response. They were angry at God.

So there was a sarcastic tone in their response to God, and God said to them, "Oh, mortal, what is good?" It sounded like to me, "What is a good life?" God is saying, a good life is to the justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God. I want you to remember these three things. (Can you put it up please?) Act justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly. These are pillars of a good life. Doing justice is to do with morality, but morality is

often viewed as a personal thing, personal morality. Doing justice is to do with not you, but with other people and the earth we live in.

Do Justice

We are doing a terrible injustice to our environment. We need to do something about it. We are abusing the earth, resources, the land... everything that you know about the environment, we are just abusing it. We need to do something about it. I'd like to do something even from our church too. You know, it is difficult to do it at church because at home you're always there so you can be conscious of it and you can separate all that. But in church you come once a week and then doing all that is difficult. But if you automatically assume that somebody will do it, it will never be done. It's hard. So if you chip in a little bit more of your time taking care of the garbage and all that, then we can do it together. And I hope that someday we can do this environmental stuff at our church. Once, we wanted to get rid of styrofoam cups. So that's why we actually bought the dishwasher, a heavy duty industrial dishwasher in the kitchen. We and everybody brought mugs and all that. So I hope that we can do something to help out with the environment.

But it's not only the environment that is abused. People are abused. Especially people who don't have power, privilege and resources. The poor people, people of different colors, different opinions. They have been abused and mistreated badly. Maybe read the book by Ta-Nehisi, 'Between The World And Me'. He really, clearly speaks out about how black people are being treated in the United States. That's that right. Simply not right. Doing justice is doing what is right. You don't treat people like that. It doesn't matter who they are, what they may have. What morality, what orientation, whatever that is, you don't treat people that way. That is not the right thing to do.

Jesus was not so harsh on personal moral failure, but he was very, very strong and harsh on those who abused people because they didn't have power. We have to be very conscious of justice all the time. You always have to be conscious of people who are treated unfairly. Poor people, powerless people, and we should stand up for them. Living with a sense of justice is what a good life is all about. And we should use our resources to help out with injustice going on around us. Last Friday at the Bible study, I

asked them, “What is the difference between abundance from God and abundance that you have created, you have made?” What is the difference between abundance that is given from God and abundance you yourself made? The difference is, abundance from God creates gratitude and thankfulness because it’s a free gift, and you are thankful for that, but also at the same time, not only that, it’s easy to share with others. Abundance you created yourself is hard to share, but people who believe that their abundance is from God, then they share their resources with others. We have to fight for justice. Always be conscious. Whether at work, school, or with your family.

That’s why I was very interested in feminism for awhile because women’s rights have been abused and treated badly. That’s why I was, for a while, very interested in liberation theology, because in South America, the people have been treated so badly. The poor people. This is a part of Jesus’ teaching. Jesus always stood up for those who are weak, vulnerable and powerless.

Love Kindness

The second pillar is to love kindness. To love kindness is to live with mercy, and then the best word that came to me comes to me is compassion. I told you the word compassion is a combination of two words, come and passion. Come is together, passion is suffering. So life that suffers with those who suffer. That’s a good life. We cannot take other people’s suffering casually. When we hear other people’s suffering, we cannot just here from one ear and then let it go out from the other ear. We cannot let it happen that way.

Sometimes I go to a Canadian church, and I speak about some stories of suffering, it is very different. When they hear it, I can feel that they feel it. They feel the suffering in the story that I share with them. That’s empathy. Compassion is empathy. When people suffer around you, we gotta suffer with them. You cannot just look at it like, “Okay, too bad.” Sympathy is different from compassion. That’s why the last two weeks, we have collected offering for Alberta. It’s not much, but at least we got to do something about it. We got to share resources to alleviate that suffering from people. The suffering of the people is real, and we have to do our best

to alleviate that suffering. It doesn't matter what it is. That's a human thing to do. That's a right thing to do.

Walk Humbly

Thirdly, walk humbly with God. Don't think that you can change anything on your own. Don't think that you can change the world on your own. We humbly ask God for help. This is to walk humbly with God. We'll do our best to the justice and show our compassion, but ultimately it is God who truly changes the world, so we'll never be discouraged. We'll try our best, but we'll never be discouraged. Humility is the same as trusting in God. From that trust, true happiness comes.

Working hard, eating healthy food, exercising regularly, and doing things that you enjoy are external things and it is about you and it's important. But living with a sense of justice, living a life of compassion and living humbly trusting in God are internal things, and is all about others and about the world we live in. We need both, but what's lacking in you? What is lacking in the modern world? I think the latter is lacking.

Your Good Life & Ours

Half of a good life is not a good life. A good life is complete. It's not half of it. Half of a good life is not a good life. We can only have a good life together, not alone. You can never be happy, you can never have a good life alone on your own. We can only be happy with others, together. Being happy when others are suffering is not a good life. It's not a good life.

People like Dr. Farmer, I told you about the book, 'Mountains Beyond Mountains', he gets about \$100,000 a year teaching at Harvard medical school. He doesn't even know where that money goes to. He lives in a church basement and he goes out and just does the work. What a wonderful example. He said, "Being happy when others are suffering is not good a life. In the process of helping those who are suffering, you become happy and you find good life. What Micah said was a summary of the preaching of all the prophets. That's what all the prophets say. Simply is summarizing into these three; do justice, live with compassion, and walk humbly with God. Those three things are a summary of the prophets message, and the summary of your life and our life.

Amazing Grace

June 5, 2016

Romans 7:14-25

Real Faith

It was good to see that they have so much confidence in life. And I always thought, what do they have that I don't have? They seem to have so much confidence in themselves about life, about everything. They seem to be so sure of what they are doing, but now I realize that they are not much different from me. They don't have more knowledge, they don't have more faith, and they don't have much confidence in themselves either. Often it was just a facade that they put on to look strong and confident. Sometimes I see young people looking cool and tough, but behind their cool and tough demeanor, I also see that they are very scared of not being cool and not being tough. What if I don't look cool? What if I don't look tough? I see that fear. So after all, they are not that cool and tough. They're just scared. Who has real faith? Not those who put on a religious facade, but the one who actually encounters God and those whose eyes are open because of that encounter to be able to see the reality of God. At the same time, they see not only the reality of God but they can also see what's in them because their eyes are open. They could see their own shame, darkness, weakness, sinfulness, so they not only see the reality of God, but they also see their own carnality of themselves. God is light, when you come into the light everything gets exposed. Not only the good things, but even the ugly things gets exposed. So before you see your own contradiction within yourself, that's what Paul confessed in today's scripture, "I do not understand myself". When I was young, I was scared of many things. I was especially scared of how people may look at me and how they will judge me. But as I got older, how people look at me is still important, but it's not that important anymore. It's still important, but it's not that important to sacrifice everything that I do or what I've learned that it is all right just to be me. It's not that great, but it's all right just to be me. I think that is what maturity does to us. Maturity gives you the courage to accept the complexity you have within you. When I was young, I saw my own contradiction and complexity. I was very insecure about it, but as I get older I realize that it's all right to have

that complexity within me. You can have critical thinking about yourself and yet you don't perish. That's the difference. Before, if I saw contradiction within myself I almost perished, but now when I see contradiction within myself, I don't perish. It doesn't perish me. It doesn't destroy me.

I was reading a book so I would like to share with you about it. It said: "critical thinking without hope is cynicism, but hope without critical thinking is naivete". I think it's pretty good. You know, we need to keep up critical thinking, but if you don't give any hope, then that is cynicism in you. You just become a cynical person. When you do critical thinking you don't want to be a cynical person. You don't want to be a complainer. You want to make changes. You want to make a productive change. That's why you do critical thinking. Not just because you're sturdy, satisfied, so you never lose hope. When you have critical thinking about others and about the world and yet you never give up hope, then you'll never become cynical. What is the Good News? What is the Gospel? What is the goodness? The goodness that Paul delivered today is this: you don't need to be perfect. That's the goodness. You don't have to be perfect. That is a message of Jesus Christ. You don't have to be so cool. You don't have to be so perfect. You don't have to be so religious. You don't have to be so righteous, because you are not.

Do not live Your Insecurities

We all have insecurities within us, but we don't want to live out our insecurities. I hope that we don't live our insecurity in our lives.

As I read Steve Jobs biography, I mean he made great achievements and all that, but I felt sad. Probably he'll feel sad for me, but I felt sad for him in a way because all his life he tried to prove to the world how good he is in everything he did because when he was very young, his biological parents gave him up. He always asked questions, why did they give me up? Why did they abandon me? Was I so bad? Was I so unworthy that they had to abandon me? He lived with this question all his life. When you watch the movie Amadeus, I don't know whether it's true or not but Sallieri always lived that lived out his insecurity. I hope that we don't live out our insecurity. You don't need to pretend to be so strong and so upright. As you hear the good news, you get this courage to think that you're alright. You can be honest with yourself. That's where everything begins, by being honest with

yourself. Then you'll be able to discover so much about yourself. You'll be able to see the insecurity deeply embedded within you and then you can laugh about that. You know, when I was young I was so skinny that my kneecap kind of protruded and I hated that. That little kneecap. All the other guys didn't have that, their's were flat. I hated it so much that I didn't want to wear my shorts at that time, but I don't have that insecurity anymore because I don't have that kneecap anymore. But also at the same time, I am strong enough to be able to handle that kneecap. But I'm just talking about a very small thing. The kinds of insecurities that I have, I cannot even talk about here. It is so embarrassing. I cannot even talk about it. Even though I still have so much insecurity within me, I know someday I'll be able to overcome that too with God's grace and I also know that those things cannot crush me anymore. I can even laugh about that.

I'm not sensitive about that. Once in a while I get sensitive, but most of times I am not. Jesus' goodness frees us from the fear of our own weaknesses, darkness, and insecurities. The good news says it is all right, I'll help you work out your own problems. You don't have to hide it anymore. You don't have to look down upon others for their weaknesses to hide your own weaknesses. I realized that the people who hide their weaknesses are usually abusive to other people's weaknesses. Now you can embrace your own weaknesses and also other people's weaknesses because you are not much different from them. As we received the good news, we become very comfortable with our own weaknesses. You are in a much better position to deal with your own weaknesses and you can also have compassion for others who are struggling with their own weaknesses, and I think that is a power of grace. That is a power of grace. Grace is a wonderful thing. As you look at your own weaknesses and embrace your own weaknesses, you can also embrace other people's weaknesses. That is the power of Grace.

Paul lived all his life without knowing what grace was all about. He was a hard working man, and he was very good in everything he did and he had to be good. He tried to be good, and he had to be good in everything he did and most of the times, he was good. But he didn't know what grace was all about. What do you mean living with grace? He didn't live with grace. He left with his strong will, but unfortunately his strong will blinded him. Only when he discovered the grace in his life, his eyes were open and he was

able to see his true self and he was able to see how scared people were and how hard they tried to cover up. I think grace is wonderful thing. We all have to understand God's grace deeply. How do we know God's grace? You don't need to be so religious to know God's grace. You don't need to be morally so perfect to know God's Grace. You don't need to be so smart to know God's grace. God's grace is available to everyone who needs that grace. That's all you need. When I need grace then that grace is available.

Turn to God

When you see your broken self instead of just looking at yourself, you can turn to God and you'll see God's grace waiting for you. That's what grace is like. When you see only you, yourself, then you cannot see grace, but when you turn around and turn to God, you see God's grace waiting for you. Jesus came to give us a grace. Jesus came and left, but he left grace with us. This is what it said in John: "and the word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the Father's only son, full of grace and truth. From his fullness, we have all received grace upon grace". That's what God gave to us last week. We said that life is a gift. Life can be only a gift when you have grace. When you know grace, then life is a gift.

There's nothing you can do. There's nothing you need to do to receive grace, but when you see your brokenness and turn to God, God will show you his grace. St Paul said this, "where sin increased grace abounded all the more". I translated a little bit, and I think this is better: "where the perception of sin increased, the power of grace abounded all the more". It's not just because you sin more that you will experience God's grace more, but when you understand your sin more deeply you will then be able to understand the power of God's grace more abundantly.

Your weakness is not something that you have to hide at all cost. When you do that, you're building a life of lies. You become a person of lies. You'll just pretend a lot of things and you'll show a facade, but that's not you. I don't want to build a life of lies. Your weakness is something that you need to confront, embrace, and expose to God. Then you'll see God's grace working in you. I do believe that is the power of life. Only there we can have true confidence in life. I hope that our insecurities do not eat us

up, parish us and destroy us. Rather, let it make us compassionate human beings to other people's weakness.

Life is Choice

July 14, 2016

Joshua 24: 14-15

“Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

Freedom to Choose

As I said last week. It is just wonderful to gather together a once a week and look at our lives and reflect upon it instead of just living it, we want to understand our life I'm living and what am I doing with my life, so it is wonderful. Once a week we come together like this and then reflect on life itself. Today I like to think about the fact that life is a choice. Life is a choice. You don't live just because we are alive. We live because we choose to live. If I don't have children, if I don't have a choice in life, I don't think I can call that life is a slavery. If I don't have a choice and somebody else cannot make this choice for me, or my life is slavery. It's not my life, so life without choice, I don't call that life. God. wants us to be human beings, to have that choice right from the very beginning of creation, God made a forbidden tree in the garden of Eden and then God told Adam, don't take any fruit from this tree, and I was always wondering why God put that forbidden tree in the middle of the garden of Eden. If God did not put that tree, then we human beings would not have fallen into sin and we would not have suffered so much only if he did not put the forbidden tree in the garden of Eden. But the moment God said to Adam and Eve that this is the forbidden tree and you should not take any fruit from that tree, the moment he said that Adam and Eve got the choice. We human beings received the right to choose. In other words, God gave them the power to choose, the right to choose. When everything was permitted, it was good, but there was no choice, but the moment God gave them the forbidden tree, now they had a choice. Precious gifts, so in that sense, choice is a precious gift. God

did not give the forbidden tree to tempt Adam and Eve or test them or restrict them. It was God's way of saying to Adam and Eve, now you have a choice, and what are you gonna do with that? Choice is God's greatest gift to humanity. Choice means freedom. And also choice means empowerment.

The Choice is Taken Away

People who can make choice, they are empower. People can make choice. They are free to do so. You know your children grow with your love under your care. They enjoy your care and protection, but as they get older they get rebellious. Even my little grandson, he gets rebellious. He wants to do everything on his own so we can't even go to a restaurant anymore because when we go to a restaurant, he yells and he wants a spoon. He cannot even use it very well, but he wanted for himself. And so, they will rebel and so when they get to the high school level, the rebellion comes to a climax. Why do they do that? is it because they don't agree with you or because they don't trust you? It is because they're claiming their right. They are claiming their right to choose. They want to make choice for themselves. They're claiming they're basic human right. Not that they'll do better because they have a choice. Now, sometimes they do worse. Sometimes they make the wrong choices, but the important thing is that they are making choices for themselves. Life is not just about not making mistakes and being always safe and successful. Life is about finding your authentic life and we doubt making a choice. How can you find your own authentic life that is worth calling is all about God called each and every one very uniquely to find that unique life for yourself. You have to learn to choose and without that choice, you cannot find that unique life. You're just living a life of somebody else. You're just imitating somebody else. Life, not your life, and to live my life, I have to know that I have the power and freedom to choose the life that I want to live.

It will take time to figure that out though. It's not that easy. Taking away choice is taking away our basic human dignity. Taking away choice is the worst thing that you can do to a person. We all know the inspiring story of Malala Yousafzai probably. Saw this picture around you in the bookstore or everywhere. And she said, when the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful. A very inspiring story of a person. She was born in

1997, so that makes her 17 or 19 already. Yeah, in 1997 in Swat valley, Pakistan. So valleys, like as they are called the Switzerland of Pakistan, she was born in a beautiful village and she loves to study. She loved to ride. She always a release was striving for good education. And in 2009 she wrote a blog on BBC. Anything anonymously she wrote a blog on BBC and she became famous but nobody knew who she was. And then soon her identity was revealed. So in 2011, she was a nominee for international children's peace prize. So we should receive this great price in 2011, but in 2012, uh, I mean she wrote about life under Taliban and in 2012 Taliban, some members of Taliban came and shot her into her head and then the bullet went through and then a kill some nerves and all that. And by the time she was a famous and somehow she was taken to the hospital in Pakistan, a major city, but soon she was taken to London, England. And she survived miraculously. And in 2014 as the youngest person, she received a Nobel prize peace prize. She said, "I didn't want my future to be imprisoned in my four walls and just cooking and giving birth." She wanted to get an education and just because of the fact that she wanted an education and the girl, her choice was taken away by the Taliban and she didn't just sit there and let her choice taken away. She fought for that choice knowing that it was dangerous for her to do that and many people around her told her not to do that, but she did that because, without that choice, her life was not life. She fought for basic human dignity. My friend's life without choice is not life, but choice does not come easily. Choice has cost formula. It was her life. That was the cost she had to risk pe. She said, "I am stronger than fear." She's only 19 years old.

Making a Difficult Choice

That's what Jesus taught us Jesus came to show us that you are stronger than fear. The disciples followed Jesus for yes, they were with Jesus. They did not realize that there were stronger than fear, but as time went along, they started realizing that they were stronger than fear and ultimately they embraced even the fear of death and they understood that truth. I am stronger than fear. My friend to Jesus Cross was the choice. The cross wasn't as something imposed upon him. Cross was a deliberate choice of Jesus Christ. He could avoid it. He didn't have to take the cross. He could go around, but Jesus could not throw away the right to choose. Jesus lived out the power to choose even though that meant death. The power to

choose was greater than the fear of death. Ultimately, the choice that Jesus man bade led Jesus to go beyond death, even though he had he chose cross risking his life and he died, but ultimately the choice led Jesus to go beyond death to resurrection. That's kind of resurrection, I believe. I don't believe in the resurrection. You just live and you die and you go to heaven. I believe in the resurrection that comes as a result of choice. I'm looking at Jesus' life. When I read it, when I reflect on Jesus' life, this thing comes to me. I don't know whether or not it comes to you but he was completely free to choose. I don't have that kind of freedom. Jesus lived with that freedom to choose.

He made most difficult choice. Every situation he had that freedom. Maybe that's why Jesus said, "you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." And he really knew the truth and that's why he was free to choose in the most difficult situation. That's why I respect Jesus. That's why I believe in Jesus. He showed what your life is all about. Every morning I get up and say to myself, this date is given to me. I choose to live God, help me choose life over death, courage over fear, love over hate, treat truth over safety or success. That's why what I pray in the morning,

God has given all of you the wonderful gift, the gift of choice. Don't let the world take away that gift from you. Don't let your fear take away that precious gift from you. Don't live a single moment of your life without making choice. My high school friends ahead of you. You have so many important decisions that you have to make, whether you like it or not, you have to make those important decisions. Learn to choose every single moment of your life. Learn to choose. Don't live other people's choice. Live the life you choose. Don't live out other people's choice and later, don't blame them. Oh, he wasn't my choice. It wasn't my parent's choice. Coil wasn't my torso and my friends did it. No, don't do that. Make your choice and don't blame anybody else. May God help you as you make choice in the beginning, you'll make lots of mistakes. That's all right, but over the years you will learn how to choose wisely. In today's passage, Joshua explaining the history of his ancestors asked people to choose whom to serve. This is what he said. Now, if you're unwilling to serve the Lord to this day whom you will serve, whether the gods of your ancestors survived in the region beyond river or the gods of the Amorites in whose land are living, but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. In other

words, we'll choose to serve the Lord. He chose to serve God. Choose to serve God. That was Jesus' choice. He said to Satan, don't send me. I chose to serve God and God alone. Don't just come to church. Choose to come to church. Don't just believe in God. Choose to believe in God. May God empower you and help you as you make choice for the Lord, for the truth, for the compassion. Let us sync together. I have decided that's our choice to follow Jesus Very Old Gospel Song, a very meaningful phrase. I had decided, I've chosen to follow, with Jesus behind me. Go with me.

Reflection

Let us have a moment of reflection about our own lives. Do we make a conscious choice every moment, or do we just live habitually or do we just follow our emotion or mood? Do we just let the environment dictate us or do we make a conscious choice to live? Let us pray that God give me the power and freedom to be able to choose. Let us pray for Katie. Yesterday I visited her. No, I couldn't even talk to her. She was not able to communicate. She's bedridden. She wasn't able to eat any food. Let us pray for Katie often. She opens her eyes and she calls out, mommy, mommy, let us pray for her last moment.

You are the Rock

August 28, 2016

Matthew 16:13-20.

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

The Highest Compliment

What you see in today’s passage is the highest compliment any human being can get. It was more than Usain Bolt and more than Michael Phelps, much more than what is given to almost super human beings. I watch the Olympics. I enjoy it thoroughly. Bolt did not run like human being, he ran like a horse. Just amazing. They were amazing. But what Peter got was a much bigger compliment. Jesus said, He would give him the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. He said, “whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth will loose in heaven”. What kind of amazing privilege is that? What kind of power? The keys to the kingdom, the keys to heaven! That is amazing authority, power, privilege, compliment and praise he got from Jesus. Jesus gave him a new name. He was Simon sort of Jonah, but Jesus said, now you will be called Peter, which means rock. He said, “I’ll build my church on the rock”. That is a high privilege, glory and compliment that he got. I wonder what Peter would have thought at that time. I don’t think Peter had any idea of what Jesus was talking about. He probably had an open mouth and was wondering, ‘the keys to the kingdom? On me? You’re going to build your church? What does that mean?’ Peter probably didn’t even understand what Jesus was talking

about. Peter, whom we know, he was unlike a rock. His name was 'rock'. The name was given to him, but he was not like a rock.

I Will Make You a Rock

The name 'rock' didn't really suit Peter. He was flimsy, he was very influenced by circumstances. He was a wishy washy person. At one moment he was saying one thing and the next moment here would do something totally contradictory to what he said. He said to Jesus, "I'll follow you to death", and as soon as the situation became very difficult, he denied Jesus three times. Simon was not at all like Peter the Rock, even though he was given that new name. I mean he did all this after he was given the name 'rock'. So I wonder what Jesus meant when he said to Simon, you are Peter, because he was not like Peter. What did Jesus mean when he said that you are Peter. I reflected on this, and I realized that what Jesus really meant was, "I will make you a rock".

Our Foundation is God

I'll make you Peter. You're Peter now and you will become like Peter. You may feel that that's not the end of it. You are still Peter and you will become Peter. Often we get discouraged about ourselves. We are affected by our circumstances. Sometimes our existence is so flimsy, we go back and forth, up and down. We don't have a solid existence. We don't have a solid life. Sometimes we are on very shaky ground and our emotions go up and down. Sometimes we feel good when we do well and we feel positive about our life. We feel confident that we can do almost anything. But when we fail, when we don't do very well, we get so negative about ourselves. We get so negative about our life, we just don't have confidence. We go up and down. Sometimes we even have four seasons in a day. We feel great at one moment. The next moment we feel so lousy. We're not like a rock, we are not solid.

Look at Ryan Lochte. He got many medals. Once he even beat Michael Phelps. Even at these Olympics, he got the gold medal. He was at the top, the peak of his career and his glory, but on the way back to the Olympic Village, he had his friends vandalized the washroom of a gas stations and he lied. He said, "I was wronged at gunpoint". The whole world was shocked. They thought that an Olympic gold medalist was robbed at

gunpoint, but he lied just to cover his bad behaviour. He lost all this sponsorships. He doesn't have sponsorships anymore. I don't know if he can come out to the next Olympics. We are weak and fall short of God's glory, but my friend, our solid foundation is not our strength. Our solid foundation is God's desire to help us and make us the person who we're meant to be. Our solid foundation is not on me. Our solid foundation is on God's desire to me into Peter, the rock.

God Makes Us

Peter did not become Peter by his own strength or because of his good solid personality. Peter became Peter because of God's endless desire to make him Peter. If you don't give up, God does not give up on you, but if you give up, even God cannot help you. Where is your solid foundation? You know my biggest problem of modern generation and the biggest problem of this generation is narcissism. I think that is the greatest problem. We have to fight against it. When things are going okay, that's fine, that's good. But once you start failing, you start losing yourself. Narcissism cannot lift you up, it cannot save you. That's the problem of narcissism.

You are the rock, not because of who you are, but because of who God is. You're the rock not because you don't fall or fail, but because God does not give up on you. On you, God wants to build his church. Now we have to have confidence in our life. God gave you so much power and authority and God called you to be the rock, to be solid, don't live by how you feel about yourselves or with the identity of the people imposed on you. Don't let the world get you down. Don't let your mind get scattered, you must have sharp focus like a rock and not like quicksand. What do you stand on? On yourself? Or on the God who never gives up on you as you strive to become the rock? I try my best in Ministry but many times I feel that my best is not enough. I fail, I get discouraged. I get discouraged about myself when it comes to Thursday. I get very anxious because the message does not come easily. I wait and wait, study and study but still the message doesn't come. Even yesterday even, I told my wife "I'm in trouble. I have no message to speak tomorrow", which was Sunday.

Faith of the Mustard Seed

I have to wait. I get discouraged about myself and about my performance all the time, but I will not let myself down. I'll try my best, but at the end of it I will always go back to God, who never gives up on me. No matter what happens to me, I'll still go back to God at the end of it because God is a solid foundation, not me. Not my ability, not my intelligence. God is a solid foundation and I need to continuously go back there and pick myself up again and stand up.

If I use myself as a foundation, I have lived my life on very, very shaky ground. If you have this foundation, you will not have hope. Even when you are helpless, when you feel that you're not good enough, if there is faith of a mustard seed, then you will have hope. That hope will not disappoint you. That hope will bring you back to be able to stand and move on with your journey. But when you trust yourself, when you are down then everything crumbles, everything dies. When you have the faith of the mustard seed, even when you are down, you will not lose hope and that hope will make us strong.

That is your foundation. Have the faith of a mustard seed. Just because you fail, don't give up. Look to God and you'll see hope. That's good news. The good news is that my life is not just based on me. My life is based on God's desire to make me who I'm meant to be. When I look at all of you, there is so much talent, so much ability. But we need more character to be able to persevere, to continuously persist, and to reach out for a dream that you have. I hope that through that faith, you build that character. The bottom generation was lacking in intelligence but our generation was lacking in character. If you're narcissistic, you'd never build character. When you have faith, you'll be able to start building your character and that character will carry on. We all fail, we all get discouraged, we all fall, but who's going to stand up and carry on? The one who has faith in God's desire to want to help you. I hope that we all build that character in our lives.

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.

Serving is Living

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.

Path of Life

March 19, 2017

Isaiah 43:14-21

Life is Like a Path

Life is like a path. When you say that life is like a path, life is a path. Do you agree with that? Or is life bunch of unconnected and disconnected events that has nothing to do with each other. This happened and another thing happened and another thing happened. It just random events, they're not connected at all. You cannot say that it is kind of a connected path. It's just happening every moment.

Or how do you look at it? When scripture often says, a life is like a story of Abraham, the story of Jacob and Joseph, there's a story. So their life is a story. In other words, whatever is happening to them is connected with each other and they create it kind of weaves, a story. So in that sense, a life is not just a whole bunch of unconnected events, but it is connected events that create a story that creates kind of path and we need to find a path, but it's hard to see a path and find a path. It is pretty difficult. What is the path that I'm walking on. Where does this path lead to and how have I lived all my life? What kind of path have I walked on? If life is a path, am I paving that path? If life is life is a path, do I just follow a general path that everybody is following? You finished school, you get a job, you get married and have children and all that.

Each Person's Path is Very Unique

Is there a general path that everybody just follows and then I just walk on the same path? Or is their a unique path just for me. Not for everyone else, but just for me is their a unique path just for me? And I want to say that there is no path that is alike. Every path is unique. As every person is unique, you have your own way. You have your own path to walk on. That's what I believe. Each person's path is very, very unique. You cannot walk on other's path and are the people cannot walk on your path.

Your path consists of your dream, your vision, your passion, the career that you chose, the friends that you make along the way, the kind of family you came from and the kind of family you make now and a kind of community you belong to all of these things together and make a path for you and that is very unique to individual and no one can walk the same path. I mean we may experience the same events, but what you get out of that event is very different. Today you hear the same physical message from me, but each person takes that message differently and processes it and digests it differently and different things are triggered. So even though we are in the same place same time, but what you get is very, very different, different and very unique for each individual. That is your path. How you make a decision, how you feel, how you relate to the world, how you build yourself. All these things shape your path. My friends, I don't think there is a path already made for you.

You Must Forge Your Own Path

I don't think the path is yet made. The Path you're gonna walk on is not made yet. You have to make it. It's not that there is already a path that you just have to walk on, no. The path is not there yet it's not created yet. Yet you have to create it. You have to make it now at this point. But depending on what kind of path you make, the destination will be very different. If you take the TTC Bloor line, you'll end up in Scarborough, but if you take the Yonge line, you'll end up in North York, so depending on what path you create, the destination will be quite different. If you live out your life with resentment, disappointment, greed and selfishness. You'll create a path that leads to bankruptcy, of life and meaninglessness. But if you live out your forgiveness, love, self giving, and hope you will create a path that leads to an abundant life and eternal life. And then I realized that yes, I have to make a path now, but realized that I cannot make a path all by myself because I don't know life enough. I don't have enough knowledge or enough wisdom, not even enough strength to make my own path. Often I experience that I get drifted away and don't know where I am and where I'm going. I just live busily doing everything. And at one point I question, "where am I? Where am I going? Where do I want to go?"

My Canoe Anecdote

Many years ago I used to take a college group to Algonquin Interior. So portaging and all that stuff, sometimes 10 people, sometimes 20, 30 people. I think one trip we even had about 40 people, like troops with canoes. So we went there and it was a very windy day. And on that day, I went out in canoe by myself. I just wanted to experience the quietness. So I went out in the middle of that lake and just lied down and enjoyed the peace and serenity. I really enjoyed the silence and peace. So for about 30 minutes or an hour, I just lied down there looking at the sky, but you know, when you lie down there in the canoe, you don't know whether the canoe is moving or not. You think that you're at the same place. But after, 30 minutes I went, "Where, am I?", you know, I got totally lost and I looked around and way back there.

There was our campsite. I usually look out for the island because of bears, you know, to be safe. Bears won't come there. I hope. So, and then I found and island so I canoed there by myself. It was windy day. It was so hard to canoe by myself because it goes back and forth like this and that. And then finally I got to the island. But somehow the problem is you get there and then I missed the island. And because of the current, and the way the wind was going like this and there was a guy, I'm not sure, maybe it was John, I maybe. I didn't know who it was. There was a guy standing at the rock and then I wave right. Help, help. How do you say hi? James is raising his hand, it was James. Yeah, I mean I was going to James. Hi, how are you? And for about five times of saying Hi back and forth he realized, oh, he needs help. So he came out with other guys and then they saved me.

We Need to Look to God to Help us Create our Paths

Sometimes, you know we need help. I don't think I can create my path all by myself. I need help from God. Israelites tried to create a path on their own. They thought they were smart and strong enough. And then Jeremiah a different prophet, he said the mistake of the Israelites were that they created a cistern, like a kind of hole on their own, the things that they made a mistake one day, try to dig a hole all by themselves and they dug a hole that cannot contain water. These two things. How true that is for us. We tried to dig our life by ourselves and at the end of we realize this whole cistern cannot hold water. I create a life that cannot hold water. The Israelites, they try to create their own life and ultimately at the end where

did that path, lead them to? To exile. They lost everything. They lost their land, their temple, their identity and everything. That's sad.

You know if all your life you've lived a really good life and at the end do you want to experience bankruptcy? Do you want to get to a point where life is so meaningless and empty.?. I hope that we don't end up there. Isaiah today, he said this, "their life was like in a desert and in the wild sea the path they created, lead them to the place they didn't want to be." But Isaiah gave us good news the message of good news. The good news is even though because of our mistakes, we ended up at the desert, but God is going to create a path for you in the desert. That's Isaiah. What Isaiah proclaimed God would even make a way in the desert.

No Matter Where we are, God will be There to Help us

Because of their stubborn and arrogant attitude. They created a path that led them to nothingness but god created a new path for them. That's what God does. My friends, sometimes we make innocent mistakes because we don't know enough because we create a certain path because of our innocent mistakes, but other times knowing that this will lead to nothing but because of our greed and selfishness we followed the path anyway. Sometimes we are so blinded and we don't see what we are doing. We are just making ourselves busy doing anything and everything without knowing where this life leads to? We just live mindlessly and habitually and we just let things happen and by doing that we create a path that takes us where we don't want to be, but the good news is that God has given us up. If you're. If we are at the desert, he'll come there to make a path. If we are in the mighty waters, he will come there to make a new path in the wild sea. This is what God said, "I am about to do a new thing" The next verse says, "now it springs forth. Now he springs springs forth to you not pursuing." You know, when I read this this time, what is that? Where is that?

When I read this, this time, somehow that new thing sounded like new path to me. I am going to make a new path for you. Do you not perceive it? I'm going to make a new path for you don't you see it? That's what Isaiah said to the Israelites and this is what God said. Also, I will give water in the wilderness and rivers in the desert to give drink to my chosen people. You are God's chosen people. God will give you to drink. even though you are creating a path of our life, but we are not creating just my own path. I said

we have a very unique path. That's why Jesus said, take the narrow road. That means your own unique way. Live your life, but yes, my path is unique, but we also create a path together. Each unique path gathers together and create a path for us to walk together. Every drop of water gathers and creates the river and each river, each river gathers and makes an ocean together. We're creating a path and this path that we create together will enrich each and every one of your unique individual paths. It will enrich you only with God. We can create a path that leads to abundance. We don't want to end up in the desert. We want to be where God's abundance is, I don't know where you are individually, but wherever you are, you can always start a new. You don't have to repeat the same path as you have lived. Now you can create a new path with God and this is what God said "do not remember the former things or consider things of old the path is not made yet for you and it you have to make a path to not make the same path necessarily. You have to make your own wonderful path from this moment on and do it with God, not by yourself, not on your own.

A Ray of Light

July 23, 2017

Luke 11:34-36

The Light Of Your Eye

Luke 11:34-36. "Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but if it is not healthy, your body is full of darkness. Therefore consider whether the light in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light with no part of it in darkness, it will be as full of light as when a lamp gives you light with this phrase." This is the word of the Lord.

I'm going to further explore the Inner Voice that I sent last Wednesday. There I said what we see controls our lives. What we see controls our lives. We are very much affected by what we see, we are very much affected by how we see things in life. We see that a lot in the Bible. Many stories actually show that. It was when Moses sent out twelve people to the land of Canaan, the promised land, before they actually entered the promised land. So these were spies, they went into the promised land. They saw the same reality, same situation. But ten people and two people had a totally different report. In other words it's the same reality, but what they saw was very, very different.

Ten people said this, "There we saw the Nephilim. The Anakites come from the Nephilim. Anakites are giant, huge people and to ourselves, we seemed like grasshoppers. And so we seem to them." So they saw giants. When they see giants, what happens is, "Oh, I'm just a grasshopper. I'm like dirt. I'm nobody compared to that giant." That's how 10 people saw it.

But two people said this, "The land that we went through as spies is an exceedingly good land." They didn't see the giant. They saw the beautiful land. Do not fear the people of the land. For they are no more than bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us, and do not fear them. Same situation, same reality. They all saw, but one focused on giants and the other focused on God who gave them the beautiful land.

Don't Look at The Wind

We see the same thing in the story of David and Goliath. All of the Israelites when they saw Goliath the giant, they were so scared and terrified. Nobody would dare to come out and fight against Goliath. They were all scared because they saw a giant. But David came along. He didn't see a giant. David saw God. And then he saw Goliath as a kind of rude man who insulted God.

So depending on who you see, what you see, you're very much affected. Jacob, he had to run away from home. He was in the middle of the wilderness and then he fell asleep. He was in the wilderness, but there he met God and all of a sudden that land became Bethel, House of God, the Holy Land. The same wilderness, but before he met God it was just a wilderness. But after he met God he saw it as the Holy Land.

Do you remember the story of Peter walking on the water, when Jesus called Peter to come? Peter focused on Jesus and he was able to walk on the water, but as soon as his focus has changed from Jesus to the wind, when he saw the wave, he started falling. The same situation, but when he saw Jesus, he was able to walk, but when he saw the wind, he started falling into the water. And Matthew recorded the incident in this way. But when Peter looked, he saw the strong wind, he became frightened and began to sink. He cried out, Lord, save me. See, how important our eyesight is, how important what we see is, how much they affect us. You may be the same reality that you're living, but depending on what you see, you can either walk on the water or fall into the water. I believe that this is a very, very important truth for you to remember. If you don't understand this truth, then you won't understand faith, you won't understand how faith works. You won't understand what the world of faith is like.

Everyone experiences the same reality, but the way everyone sees the reality is very different. So I'll say, we don't live the reality. We live the perceived reality. Let me say it again. We don't live the reality, we live the perceived reality. The reality doesn't kill us, the perceived reality kills us. We should not live oppressed by our reality. We are given the power to interpret our reality. We don't just live the reality. We have power to

interpret our reality, and we live with that power to interpret our own reality. I believe that that power comes when we have the eyes of faith. When we have the eyes of faith, we have the power to understand our reality in a new way. Otherwise, you will see as everybody else sees. But when you have the eyes of faith, you'll see a deeper aspect, deeper dimension of your reality, and you will live that reality, the reality that you saw. You know, the eyes of faith always look for a ray of light in the most difficult and gloomy situations. In the pitch black darkness, the eyes of faith always search for a small ray of light, and when you follow that light, a whole new world opens up for you. Depending on what we see, our mood changes, our thinking changes, our life changes. If you see certain things over and over and over again, you are shaped by it, if our eyes only see the darkness of life, we will become gloomy, our thinking will become distorted and our lifestyle becomes dark. In that sense, your eye is the lamp of your body. If you're constantly seeing only pleasure in your life, then what you see will shape you and be the kind of person you become. If you constantly see self-centeredness, only yourself, then you'll be shaped by that self-centeredness.

Follow The Light

Our eyes are so important and what we see routinely and repetitively. That's what's important. What do you see repetitively? Not just once or twice, but continuously. What do you see everyday in your life? That will be what will shape you. When our eyes see the ray of light, then everything comes alive – the way we see the world, the way we see each other and the way we see our life. The eyes of faith actively search for the ray of light in the darkness and I realized that the eyes of faith never misses the opportunity. Doesn't matter how small the opportunity may be, the eyes of faith always see that.

Sometimes we see no way out. Don't you experience that? There is no way out, no solution in our problems... but when you carefully look at them – your problems and your situation – you'll be able to see small potential for the answer, and God lets us see that small opening, and we have to have eyes of faith to see that. Discover a deeper perspective. Your life will change. Find the light in your life. The light will guide you. The light will open up the new world for you.

People only see death. Death is everything. Death is the end. But even in death, the eyes of faith looks for a ray of light, and that's what Paul did. When he saw death and it found a ray of light, he saw the resurrection. Death may be the reality for everyone, but to Paul, he saw the ray of light and resurrection even in death. When we see only death, the death will control our life, but if we see a ray of light, even in the darkness of death, the light will lead us to resurrection. Don't think that the reality you presently see is everything. That's a fool, only fools do that. Don't give what you see the absolute value and power. What you see may be a typical, superficial, mindless, and distorted interpretation of your reality. That is not everything.

Newton's universe and Einstein's universe are very different. It is the same universe, but the way Newton saw the universe was very different from the way Einstein saw the universe. Just last week, Time magazine chose Einstein and had a special, good magazine, go and buy it. I just bought it yesterday. I was reading through it and though the universe – it's the same universe – but what Einstein saw opened up a whole new perspective, a whole new world for all of us. Cultivate your eyes so that you may see bigger things in your reality. With the eyes of faith, we can see new things in any circumstance.

Your Reality

That's why St. Paul says, "Give thanks in all circumstances." Because in all circumstances, even in bad circumstances, Paul found something beautiful. That's why he said, "Give thanks in all circumstances." you'll see hope in despair, God's power in your suffering, resurrection, in death and light in darkness.

People fall not because of reality. People fall because of their distorted reality, distorted view of reality. As we experience hardships in life, failures in life, disappointments in life, our eyes have become distorted. Our eyes need to be restored in our Lord. We pray that God may touch our eyes and restore them, like the scale that fell from Paul's eyes when he met Christ. I wish that the scales that blocked my vision may fall from my eyes so that I may be able to see the beautiful world of God. Beautiful life, I want to see. What is the sermon you listen to every week? What is the nature of sermon? Sermon is very much like an interpretation of your reality. You should see this reality in this way. That's what sermon is all about.

A Ray of Light

Try to find the answer every day that opens up your life, not closes your life. Always find the answer that opens up your life. You will be able to see that answer and you'll become a bigger person.

Three Qualities of a Meaningful Life

July 30, 2017

Matthew 13:44-46

Qualities You Need

The Kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone found and hid. Then in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls on finding one pearl of great value. He went and sold all that he had and bought it. When you look at the scripture I'm going to talk about three things today and all of them are within this scripture. Professor Susan Wolf who used to teach at Harvard and also John Hopkins, a set in her book, "meaning in life and why it matters. She said that there are, there have to be at least three elements for us to live a meaningful life. Three qualities or three elements. First one is passion. The second one is an active engagement. The third one is the objective of value.

I like to reflect on the meaningful life today. Why is meaningful life important? Because meaningful life is a happy life, without meaningfulness. Happiness is not possible happy life is not just about having fun, a happy life is not just about enjoying the abundance of life. A happy life is not just doing well in your career all of those things are very important to make you happy, but by themselves that won't give you a happy life because around you have seen people who have all those very unhappy, so happy lives. These are important things to have, but underneath there has to be one thing essentially, and that essential thing that you have underneath all these things is meaningfulness. In other words, you have to believe that your life is worth it. You have to believe that your existence is worth it.

Something to Move Forward

Your existence has some meaning and some value. If you don't feel that my life has any meaning or value, then no matter what you do, you cannot have a truly happy life. So we human beings are created to pursue and search for the meaning. It is in our gene. It is coded genetically within us. So every human being who lives a good, happy life, they are searching for the meaning. So the meaning is, is very important in life. And I like to look

at these three qualities or elements of meaningful life. The first one is a passion. There has to be a passion, in a meaningful life. Life Without Passion. There's no meaning. I mean, you have to have something very important in your life. Something you're passionate about. You know, one disease or poison that I see in modern generations when I look at their eyes, there's no energy in their eyes.

There's no passion. They're just: "Yeah. Yeah. Okay. I like it. Yeah. Yeah. But yeah." Everything is just kind of a mediocre. You don't have anything. You have nothing to be passionate, but I really want to eat this or I really want to do this or I really want to achieve this. We lack that kind of a passion. You know, life's passion is like a furnace that Burns your existence, that Burns your life, say, and this energy that moves you forward. That's what passion is. So like no matter how busy you are, how tired you are, the next morning you get up to do that, you get new energy. There's always energy left to do that thing. That is passion. When you look at Jesus' life, I think he was quite passionate, man. Nothing could take away his passion.

Even the cross cannot take away his passion. He went all the way to the cross to live out his passion. Nothing could threaten to take away his passion. No threat was powerful enough to stop Jesus' passion. Whatever you decide to do, I realized that you will experience obstacles, obstacles always we experience. You cannot achieve anything without obstacles. When you do certain things for so long and then you realize that you're hitting the wall. You cannot go any further. You hit the wall and most people give up right there, but it is a passion that break through the wall. It is a passion that breaks down, that obstacle, with that passion, you can overcome obstacles. All the great people don't think that they had an easy, easy way, easy time. They all experienced obstacles, probably the wall higher than the other walls that we experience. They experience, tremendous obstacles, but they went through the obstacles because they had a passion in their lives.

Passion

There is a will, there is a way, there is passion, there is a way when you have passion, the door is open for you and the road is an opened up for you. The way you can see. so passion really opens your eyes to be able to

see the way a person with this passion. Her name is Dorcas Gordon. Dr. Dockers, Dorcas Gordon a, she used to be, she just retired, but she used to be a principal of Knox College, but when she went to theological seminary, people called her your demon possessed. Why? Because you're a woman studying theology. He was like that a few decades ago. He was like that your woman and you're studying theology, you must be like a demon possessed or whatever. That threat or that kind of attitude did not stop her. Her passion overcame that obstacle. She was not discouraged because of that. And as she went all the way and at the school as well, where is she was labeled as Demon possessed.

She even became the principal, the leader of their school. That's what passion does. To live a meaningful life. You have to have passion. I hope that all of you think about what your passion is. What is, what is your passion for life? Think about it. It's amazing to have passion. Some older people have passion like Kathy's father. His passion for photography and the other last night he came to me, Reverend, I guess from my store, I got some kind of rebate from the government. And then please tell my wife I need a new full frame camera. Her, his wife will not be buying the cameras. He asked me to ask you is why?

Oh, you gotta have some passion. Whatever that is. And in passionate is something that you, you need to cultivate. If you're taking everything so mediocre and everything becomes mediocre, but when you rip passionate about, then you can cultivate. You can build that passion within you. Second, the passion by itself is not enough. You need a channel through which your passion becomes actualized. Otherwise, it just becomes a vain dream. You need to actively engage to do something about your passion. Passion has to be translated concretely into something concrete. Are you engaging? We have to constantly ask ourselves, what are you gonna do about it?

Engage

Dorcas had a passion and then I'm in via principle of no now's college or to be a professor in theology, you have to have a Ph.D. I mean, she had four children and she told me, I mean, she, she and I are very close. She told me, you know when I studied, I had my babies on my back and I went to the class sometimes when the baby cries, she came out and then went

back to the class. That's how she finished her Ph.D. She did something about it. You have to constantly think about what are you gonna do about your passion. Nothing can be done easily. We have too many what ifs. What if I cannot do it? What if I fail? What if, what if? What if? Sometimes we never get to the anything where we constantly think about what if thousand miles journey begins with a small step. Actually, that word, that phrase when I first met Dorcas in her office when I entered in that agency, a thousand miles begin with a small step. It is important to take one step at a time when you actually engage in, engage in what you want to do. What do you experience? When don't you engage it? You didn't experience it, but once you actually engage in it, what do you experience? You experience failure. For those who never try, they never know what failure is, but people who achieve great things, they are very familiar with failure.

Hey, when you actually get things, try to get things done. What you experiences feeling? Everybody experiences failure. Failure is a part of the process, is not a result. One succeeds without failure. People who never did anything about their lives with their lives, they don't know what failure is for people who did wonderful things about life tape, all experienced tremendous failures. Michael Jordan, Michael Jordan became just market jewel Jordan because he was born with that talent. Of course, he was born with talent and height too. I can never be like Michael Jordan, but just because he was born with his physique and the talent, Michael Jordan did not become just mark Jordan. This is what he said, I can accept failure. Everyone feels like something, but I cannot upset not trying. He always tried. He always tried. He failed and failed and failed. He tried again and again and again.

I mean I really love Tiger Woods these days. He's not doing very well, so I'm very sad that he's not doing very well. But, you know, after every game he used to always other people went to the clubhouse or whatever. He went back to the putting green and he was practicing because he was correcting himself. Failure and success are not two opposite ends. Failure is simply a process of success and part of it, failure is not a shameful thing. You shouldn't feel embarrassed about failure. You shouldn't be sensitive to your failure. Thomas Edison said I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work. This is a great attitude, isn't it? I mean, all of these great people have a great attitude of all their lives. They don't see things as

a failure, as a, as we reflect on the last week, they didn't see it as a failure. They just learned something new that won't work. To overcome failures, you need to be strong.

A Strong Character

You need to have a character. There is strong to overcome failures because most people will give up. What is the best way to make you strong? I believe that it is faith, faith that keeps you going, not your own strength, but the strength of faith. St Paul experienced tremendous difficulties and hardships in his life, a lot of persecutions, lot of oppositions, and he, he, he experienced a lot of failures too. Well, what kept him? This is what kept him going. 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's what kept him going. Even though I feel God never fails, even though I cannot take anymore, God will continue and it is God who'll who began a good work and it is God who completed in your life have that kind of attitude. Then you will never give up. This conviction drives us and compels us to keep knocking even when we feel that the door is really quite tight shot. We'll keep knocking. Finally, whatever we do for your life to be meaningful, it has to have objective value. No matter how passionate Hitler might've been and how concretely he lived out, his passion to conquer the world. I won't say that that life is meaningful life because it lacks objective value. Conquering the weak and the vulnerable concrete. Other countries cannot have objective value.

When I look at Jesus' life or Paul's life, I can see their worldview. I can see their philosophy of life. They lived in the world where there were no human rights for women and rice, for the slaves. They're primitive society. The powerful, always conquer the weak and the vulnerable, but even in that society, Jesus thinking and Paul's thinking, we're very different. This is what Jesus said, but Jesus called them to him and said, you know that the rulers of the gentiles lorded over them and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you, but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave, just as the son of man came, not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many that is a very, very different thinking from the society he used to live. He is more than 2000 years ahead. He

always thought about objective value. This is what Saint Paul said. See, Paul's teachings are seen. There is no longer a Jew or a Greek. There is no longer a slave or free. There is no longer male and female for all of your one increase. Jesus this theme in this crazy statement 2000 years ago, what are you talking about, Paul?

But he said that prejudice was taken for granted in Jesus' life and Paul's life, and yet they preached equality. What they try to do had objective value, meaningful life doesn't have to be big and glamorous. A meaningful life is our everyday living. Objective. Value has nothing to do with people's recognition. Objective value has everything to do with being helpful to others in whatever way it may be.

Reflection

These three things, so what are those three things? First of all, passion, a second activity, engagement, third objective value. Think about it. A meaningful life is a good life. A meaningful life is a happy life. I want all of you to live with passion, to do something about with your life, even though it is short and through your life. I pray that other people get tremendous benefit. Let us sing together.

Imitators of God

October 29, 2017

Ephesians 5:1-2

True meaning of Imago Dei

Imago Dei means the image of God. Let us hear the word of the Lord, Ephesians Chapter Five verse 1 to 2 “therefore be imitators of God as beloved children and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”. This is the word of the Lord, thanks be to God. Imago Dei, means the image of God. This implies that we human beings are created in God’s image. Meaning we have God’s image within us, each individual, each person has God’s image within them. I think it is very important to understand this, to understand Christian ethics and Christian living because of this theory. Through this theory of basic belief, we consider every human being precious and we uphold their dignity. We oppose any kind of corruption and the abuse that takes away this basic human dignity. The slavery system in human history, the kind of racism their descendants receive in the United States, sexual discrimination and what happened in Las Vegas. We don’t condone these, believing that they opposed our belief that all human beings are created equal in God’s image.

God’s Image

When we understand that we are created in God’s image, the way we treat each other changes. We’ll treat others with respect and affirm their dignity with our mouth, with our behavior, with our attitude. We treat each person with dignity. That’s what we do. Jesus came to this world to restore the image of God in each person, that’s what Jesus came to do. Saint Paul told us to be the imitators of God. In other words, being imitators of God, meaning find God’s image within us. You have to know that you have God’s image within you. As beloved children of God, Saint Paul told us to be imitators of God. As we accept that we are God’s beloved children, our Imago Dei is restored within us. When we deeply experience God’s love within us, then we can see the beautiful image of God within us. Then self respect will be restored and this is the very basic thing that the Bible

teaches us. Let me say one thing very important for you to remember this morning or this afternoon. We do not have dignity because I am useful, we have dignity because we have God's image within us. We don't have dignity just because we are useful. We have dignity because we have God's image within us. This is a very important statement. We need to affirm this because this is not affirmed in the world we live in. We give dignity to the people who are useful, but we don't affirm the dignity for the people who we think are not that useful.

Finding the Imago Dei Within One

When Jesus came to this world, he saw that the useless people were treated badly. These useless people, they said not only are they useless, but they are sinners. They said they were dehumanized. They were labelled as sinners simply because they were useless in their eyes. The lepers, the lame, the blind. All of these people were considered as sinners. When you read the Acts of the Apostles, Peter and John went to the temple and when they were about to enter into the temple at the gate, there was a lame sitting down asking for money, begging for money, and Peter and John said this, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk" and this lame was able to stand up and walk. Do you know where he went? First? After he was healed?, he was leaping for joy and entered into the temple. Why? Because he was sitting in front of the temple, but he could not enter into the temple because they said "you are a sinner". He could not even approach God because they considered them totally useless. They ignored and disrespected the useless people. They saw them as a waste, waste for the society, but Jesus was different. Jesus saw Imago Dei within them, not because they were useful, but because Jesus saw the imago Dei within them. Jesus honoured their dignity.

The Church Today

Today is the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and it is also the 21st anniversary of our church. Our church anniversary always falls on the Reformation day, so it has some significance and meaning for this church. On October 31st 1517, the reformer, Martin Luther started the Reformation. He saw the corruption and the exploitation of the Church. The Church had lots of power, but with that power, they took away the rights of the people.

Each person's dignity was not respected. He saw that the church was just an institution and each person was simply used to strengthen the institution. They didn't know that the people, were the Church. The church did not see each person with a beautiful image of God. Now, 500 years later, we need to restore our church. We need to have reformation for the reformed churches, Protestant. Restoring church means each person's dignity should be restored. I see a lot of churches just using people as a tool to make the church bigger and bigger. All the mega churches movement, we don't see Imago Dei in each person. They don't treat them in that way. When we have the Imago Dei restored within us, we can see the beautiful image of God in other people. Then we can treat each other as though we treat God. The way we treat each other should be changed, just because I have the power, just because I'm smart, we cannot treat those who don't have the power and intelligence and capability with content. That is not the right thing to do. Yes, we need power to maintain the society. We need power to protect ourselves from chaos and disorder. We need power to control those who abuse the power. We need power to coexist, but this power can not be abused. To take away the image of God in people and dehumanize them. We fight in every way against this kind of attitude because it is against the spirit of Imago Dei. It's against our belief.

Our World

When I look at the modern world, I see the power controlling everything. People are obsessed with power. We're not much different from the society Jesus came to, if not worse. Jesus saw that the Imago Dei was gone in people's minds and he saw only the raw power controlling the world. Huge Roman power and huge Jewish power, clerics religious power. So Jesus made a whip and chased the money changers. Once people came to Jesus to test Jesus and they said, "should we pay the tax to Caesars?" because Caesars controlled the Israel. Jesus did not answer their question, but Jesus challenged them with something else. Jesus told them, bring your coin and they brought the coin and he let them see it, "what image do you see there?" and they said "the image of Caesar" and Jesus said, "give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's", in other words see yourself. What image do you see everyday? What image do you see within yourself? Image of Caesar or image of God?

Restoring Imago Dei

Let us see what image we see within ourselves. Is it the image of power or the image of God? I pray that Imago Dei may be restored within us. I pray that Imago Dei may be restored in this world. The materialism replaces the Imago Dei within us with the image of money. Danielle you're going to South Africa, you will see a lot of irony. You went there once, but you're going again. I've been there more than 10 times. In our area, just one room a whole family lives, no running water and no washroom. You drive five minutes, you will see Eaton Center right there in South Africa. Still the living standard between white and black are radically different. You'll see how much people are damaged. You will witness that. I hope that you witness Imago Dei in each person. To restore the Imago Dei Jesus gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God within Jesus. There was Imago Dei. That's why Saint Paul said, "let us see" in their case the God of this world, the God of this, I don't know what it is, money, power, whatever. The God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. Who is, Imago Dei. Who is the image of God. Jesus saw the Imago Dei within himself and he saw the Imago Dei within others. That was his life, let us deeply meditate on his life so that our own Imago Dei within us may be restored.

Living With Urgency

November 18, 2017

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Living with Urgency Versus without Urgency

The early Christians thought that Jesus was coming very soon. Of course, as you know, Jesus did not come as soon as they expected, they kind of lived with some mistaken expectation about the coming of Jesus, but there was one thing that all the early Christians had, they were alert and they lived with a sense of urgency. In the early Christian community. This sense of urgency was very important. Therefore, they all emphasized the importance of living with a sense of urgency. So even in their documentation, they made sure that the story about that will be there. So for example, a Jesus' parable about 10 bridesmaids; Jesus came, and five bridesmaids prepare the oil, but the other five did not prepare the oil. In other words, the five were awake and alert, and they lived with a sense of urgency, but the other five did not do that.

Urgency in a Model Society

A lot of stories are in the Bible to show that living with a sense of urgency is very important. In that urgency, I believe that they were able to produce the masterpiece called the Bible. The Bible did not just come into existence in a normal mindset, in that very urgent mindset. They were able to produce the masterpiece called the New Testament. Living with a sense of urgency does that, it puts you in a totally different mindset. The person who lives with urgency, and the person who lives mindlessly, the quality of their mindset, the quality of their thinking are totally different. When you live with a sense of urgency, you can be creative, alert, purposeful, passionate and alive. That's what he does. People come alive when they have the sense of urgency, the modern society; I don't know why the model society takes away this sense of urgency in people. I feel like we're all crazy, like we hear so many people get killed in Las Vegas and then all of a sudden we get this urgency. Wow. And the next day as though nothing happened and that's something that we look at, and then we walk away. Even when I look at myself, this is crazy. When two people are threatening each other with

nuclear threats. Oh, I just hope that nothing bad happens and we just move on. There's no sense of urgency at all in modern life. I don't know why. Maybe our life is too structured and programmed, so we feel we have security and stability? Is that why?

Whatever the reason may be losing this sense of urgency is killing our soul! it's killing us. Is it because the world has become so big that we feel drowned in it? I can't do nothing about it, but I see some exceptional people who live with a sense of urgency. Even around us.

Urgency to Improve Life

The other day I read an article in the Rolling Stone magazine about Elon Musk. It was a very interesting article. It was a interview, and Elon's brother Kimbal, said about Elon in this way. He's able to see things more clearly in a way that no one else I know of can understand. His brother saw his brother, and he had this keen sense of seeing things that no other people can see. And Elon Musk said, climate change is the biggest threat that humanity faces this century except for artificial intelligence. Elon Musk makes rockets, he created an electric car, and he is looking for planets for human beings to be able to inhabit- and I don't know, sounds like crazy. But somehow he's not comfortable with the way he just lives. He has this sense of urgency. We gotta do something about it. We cannot just move on. I mean, he has so much money, has so much power. He can live his life without worrying about anything, without sense of urgency. He can eat a steak every night if he wants. still has lots of money left. I mean, he could comfortably go on vacation all he wants if he just lives for himself. He didn't need to feel any sense of urgency. He could just live normal, but he lived with his sense of urgency to leave a better universe, better nature, better earth to the next generation. Is it because he's so smart and so powerful and so big? That, he could make some changes in the world. He can dare to think about making a dent in the universe or he is there make some changes in the war because he's so smart and so powerful? Maybe. It may be easier for him to have the sense of urgency because he's so powerful, that he can do something about it, something about his life and something about the world he lives in, but I don't think only smart and powerful people can live with a sense of urgency. I think a sense of urgency comes from a clear understanding of one's purpose.

Understanding Your Purpose

When you have clear understanding of your purpose, then you have sense of urgency. When you don't have any purpose, then nothing's urgent. Just life moves on, you can just live comfortably, but when you have something that you want to achieve while you are alive, then you get this sense of urgency. We won't be just satisfied with just making a living. When we have a purpose, peace and security will not be everything we want in life. My friends, that's a lie, that is a lie, peace and security is everything about life? that is a defeated mentality. That's people who lost their soul, they think like that. Peace and security is not everything about life. That was what Saint Paul said in today's scripture when they say there is peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come up on a pregnant woman, and there'll be no escape.

Choosing to Create through Urgency

In Paul's time. Many people live with sense of security and peace; like Roman peace, Pax Romana. Well, everything is good and fine. Everything is peaceful, and you are secure. Paul was surrounded by that kind of mentality, but he saw something else. No, there's an urgency here, so peace and security versus urgency. Paul chose urgency and I agree with Paul. Paul is saying live with a sense of urgency, a sense of urgency is more important than living with a false sense of peace and security, living with a false sense of peace and security. We can create nothing. We can do nothing. When we live with a sense of urgency, we enter into a different realm of life. It is different consciousness, different realm of existence. When we have that sense of urgency, we enter into that. When artists produce a masterpiece, they are in a different level of consciousness, a different realm of existence. Your power and energy will come from within us. Everything comes alive within us. Every cell of our bodies, awakened with new vitality. We don't live falling asleep, we are urgent. I wonder where this sense of urgency comes from, mistaken expectation? "Oh, Jesus will come soon." Is that how they got the sense of urgency? Maybe partly. So I was reflecting on it. Where did these early Christians get that urgency? I

reflected on it and read the Scripture and I found this scripture that is from acts, it is what Luke said, but he was actually the quotation from the Joel prophet. He says "in the last days it will be, God declares that I'll pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

Changing your Path from Reality to Dreams

When the spirit came upon them, something happened within them. All of a sudden they all became awakened and they got this sense of urgency, and in that state of mind they were able to prophesy. Young people could see visions and old people could dream dreams, something totally no one ever expected happened within them. They were able to see visions. They were able to dream dreams. Certainly Martin Luther King Jr., When everybody automatically assumed racial discrimination is reality of life that you must live by, he said no, and he with a sense of urgency, he wanted to change that. I think it's the movement of the spirit, it is I believe, the prompting of the spirit, that prompts you to live a better life. They all entered into a different realm of life, different dimension. Their life became a life of vision, dream, and purpose. All the great people in the history saw the vision, had the dream and lived out the purpose they found. That was how they impacted the world. Living a lethargic life is not an only option. Don't believe in that lie, just because you have a house secured, job secured.

Live for Others

That's not the only option to live. That can never be your goal. We have to see bigger things in life. You have to find life. We are made. We are made not to be happy when you live only for yourself. That's how we are created to be. We can never be happy when we live for ourselves. Is it nature? We can only be happy when we live for other people and for God, who takes care of- who cares for the world, only then we can be happy. That is a noble purpose. Time we have, it's not going to be there all the time. When we realized that time is limited, we cannot just waste our time. St. Paul said this; "Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. You already know it, for you yourself know very well that the day of the lord will come like a thief in the night.". The other day I watched the news and this guy was making a bomb

shelter, he built everything so that he could be saved from the nuclear war, and be able to securely live for many years.

Do Not Live with a Defeated Mentality

Being awake means this present moment is awake. There may not be tomorrow, tomorrow is tomorrow, but today, we must be awake. You can do so much. You can do so much. You know, it saddens me when I see talented people waste their lives with defeated mentality. It saddens me. It makes me angry when they could do much better.

The other day I talked with a guy. He called me, he lives in San Francisco “Reverend, I want to give a donation or a gift scholarship in my father’s name.” He said “I’ll give \$100,000 initially and every year \$12,000. I want to support theological students with that money.” So I said “that’s great. I’ll help you use your money.” And the other day a woman came to me, “I’ll give a \$30,000 to help out the poor and needy during this Christmas season.” at least there is some movement. As we come to God, God will awaken us as we humbly pray, the spirit will awaken us, then we can enter into a different realm of existence, not just victims of materialism. Your horizon will be open, your eyes will be open, you can see the vision and you will dream dreams. I think that is what life is all about. I believe that was the power that broke through the darkness in the early Christian history. I mean, it is just a miracle for me how Christianity survived that kind of persecution in the first 20, 30 or 50 years.

Let Yourself become ‘Awake’

I mean, it’s a small set. 12 people started, hundred people gathered together and prayed, and how could they break through that roman power and all that way of roman thinking, and become Christian. Christianity? That itself is a miracle. I believe that it is a power of those who are urgent, who felt urgency, I think it is the power of those who are totally awake. They had a different sense of living. We have to be alive. We have to be awake. We have to come alive. Are there artists who can create masterpieces? Are they engineers? Are they a poet? You can come up with a tremendous piece once your whole week. You’re very talented people, but talent itself is not good enough. Your brain is not good enough.

You need power for your talents to become actualized like god. Anoint you. Let god take you to a higher level. Let us come out of our shelter and enjoy the freedom to be the best you can be for others sake, for God, and for the world.

Way of Life

February 11, 2018

Isaiah 43:18-21

The Road we Take

Last week we talked about how worship is total immersion. Total immersion is when you enter into God's presence, but you cannot enter into God's presence only through the intellect. You can enter into God's presence through total immersion. Today, I would like to say that worship is my spirit meeting God's spirit or collectively our spirit meeting God's spirit. When we meet God's spirit, because God is spirit and where there is a spirit, there is freedom. We become free. And as we become free we enter into the glory of God. Have we experienced the glory of God? That's what worship is. If this doesn't happen, it is just a worshipful act. The worshipful act is not worship. Worship is a spiritual thing. It's not a physical thing. So when we meet God and our spirit becomes free and we enter into the glory of God and their worship happens, and that's what we are trying to do every week.

People think of life as a way. A lot of philosophers talked about life as a way and a lot of poets like Robert Frost, who wrote about roads less travelled and they talk about life as a way. Our Lord Jesus also said, "I am the way." In other words, life is way, I am the way. And also he said there is a narrow road and wide road. He kind of used this metaphor of way to describe our life. We may take a very different road in a different way. Every one of us takes a different way and the way that we choose leads us to a different place.

The Path We Make

I've seen my own children growing up, Josh and Grace, they are both my children and they lived under the same care, but the way they chose their way was radically different. I realized how different every person's life is. We cannot necessarily say that one way is better than other ways. We cannot say that everyone should follow one way because that is the best way. And also in life, there is no right order. Always. Life doesn't happen. One, two, three, four. Sometimes four comes first and the rest of it comes at a different time. Even the order of life is very different. The reason we

choose a way depends on many things, for example, our circumstances at that time or our feelings and emotion or the kind of people that we meet and sometimes even our blindness and ignorance. These things affect us in choosing our way sometimes as we look back, I was so stupid. I was so ignorant, I didn't know anything, and in blindness, I've chosen many things. Sometimes we feel that but all these things affect which way we choose, but whatever the reason may be, the way we chose shapes us, defines us and makes us a person who we are right now. We didn't just come here accidentally. We came here by the way that we chose and we came to this place. We don't need to blame others or our circumstances. The important thing is we still have a way to choose in front of us.

No matter what you have chosen. Still, we have a way, the road that we need to choose. I'm not talking just talking about our careers or work. I'm talking about the way we live our lives, but I've realized that the way is not necessarily something I choose. That's something I realize the way it's shown to us. I thought all this time I thought that the way the road I choose, but sometimes the way is opened up for me. You just kind of shown to us.

The problem is we're not spiritual enough. We don't pray enough. We don't have quiet time enough, and so we don't see what road, what way is opened up for us. Many times we just choose the easy way because that is most convenient. We choose a way because we just feel like it. We just choose a way because that is the only way that I know. I don't know any other way to choose. I just live my life by the given kind of lifestyle that is given to me or because we are so used to living in a certain way. We just continue living that way. The easy way is not always my way. The secret of life is to always create a new path. I believe that that's the secret of life. To create a new path there is no way that is already paved. Well for you.

There is no way. We just have an illusion that there is a way that is paved for me, but there is no way that is paved specifically for you. You have to create that path, that way on your own. We have to find a way that God opens for us. Today Isaiah said, I'll make a way in the wilderness.

That's a very strange statement. I'll make a way in the wilderness. Wilderness is not a place where there is a way. There's no road in the wilderness. That's what wilderness is. But God is saying, I will make a way in the wilderness. We didn't read it today, but in verse 16, Isaiah described

it more dramatically. He said, “thus says the Lord who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters.” I mean, where is there a way in the sea where is water in the mighty waters, but God is saying, I’ll make a way, in the sea. God will create a way where there is no way. That is the kind of God we have. God does not want you to continue your way because you don’t see a new way.

Don’t Give up

When people hit the dead end, they always try to go back to the old ways. That was what the Israelites did in the wilderness. Every time they did that, not just once or twice. Every time they faced challenges and they experienced the dead end, “We can’t go any further here. There’s an ocean in front of us and there’s no food. There’s no drink, there’s no way out” and every time we’re in the experience of life challenges, “Oh, let us go back to Egypt. Let us go back to Egypt.” I mean every time God made a way for them, but still when a new problem comes they automatically say, “let us go back to Egypt.” That’s what they did.

In Isaiah. God said to the Israelites, “do not remember the former things were considered the things of old.” What he’s saying is don’t try to go back. Don’t give up. Don’t cut your journey short and then God said, “I am about to do a new thing.” Now it springs forth. Do you not perceive it? Don’t just see the way, the new way that I created for you do not, don’t you perceive it? I’ll make a new thing for you, don’t you see it? And then he said, I’ll make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

No Maps, No Directions

My friends, in life, there is no map for you. I’m sorry to tell you that, but there is no map for you. That is the difference between the literal way and the metaphorical way. When we think about the literal way, we always think about map, these days GPS. If there is no road in GPS there, if there’s no road in the map, then there is no road, but in a metaphorical way, there is no GPS. In the way God creates for us, there is no GPS. You cannot find a way by turning on your GPS. You are not a map follower. You are a map maker. Our map is not complete yet. So far we have created a map for us, but in front of us there is a road that is not yet on the map and you have to draw that map from this point on. God always makes a new way for you,

just because yesterday you lived in this way. You don't have to live today in the same way, and tomorrow your life will not necessarily be the same. Keeping it the same is not the best strategy of life, it's not the best thing to do, maybe safest, but it's not the best thing to do or a most exciting way to live your life.

Don't just complain because you don't see the way. Don't just give up because you don't see the way. Get used to searching for the way and creating the way. It probably won't be you who created the way but God will open up the way and then you will search for it. While writing this sermon this image came to me. That image is: you make a way you live all your life you make a way and then you come to the dead end. So there. "Oh my goodness, I have nothing. I have no place to go further." But right there you have to create a path, but it's very short. When you create a path, a new world opens up. But most people, when they see the dead end, they are so scared, they don't create a path and they just give up there and then life ends right there, at the dead end.

Reflection

Instead of just sitting down at the dead end, you have to now create a path. Then you will enter into a totally different world. A new world. And I was thinking about death because I have a lot of KSM members who are aged people, they are probably facing the last five years, ten years. And I told them when you face death you may not be able to see the road any further. You think that that's the dead end, that's the finish. But when you're used to seeing what is not, what is hidden, then maybe at the end you'll be able to see the road that connects the whole thing. And I realize the way that we create, it should not end here, you have to create a path and you have to get there. The whole way will make sense it makes sense. Ah, this is how the road begins and this is how the road ends. Don't give up in the middle of it. You have a way that you need to create to make the whole way meaningful. Your way is not complete yet. This is the moment that, okay, what way should I create? What way should I search for? Day by day we have to live like that. You may be able to see the map behind you, but you don't have a map in front of you, but that's exciting because God will create a way for you.

Foolishness and Greed

March 11, 2018

Psalm 107:17-22

Becoming Fools

Today's scripture passage talks about becoming fools. Some became fools through their rebellious ways. Some became fools. Because they became fools, they suffered affliction, they even lost the appetite, and they were drawn near the gates of death. Because they became fools they suffer so much. The life is just full of suffering, continuous, repetitive suffering, struggle and hardship. Life is supposed to be enjoyed. Life supposed to be good, but because they have become fools, they don't even enjoy life. They just survive. They just persevere through life rather than really enjoying the fullness of life because they have become fools. And I wonder why people become fools. I think these people are not stupid. I think they're intelligent people, smart people. These are Jewish people. I think they are, have a high intelligence, and then why they have become fools and suffer so much. So meditating on this, I realized that becoming fool has nothing to do with your intelligence or the kind of intelligence or the level of education. We can be fools while we are being very smart. So that kind of intelligence does not really help us living a life. Being a fool is not lack of intellectual ability.

The Different Kinds of Intelligence

I think there's different kinds of intelligence. There's intelligence that makes your life happy, enjoyable, and a good and all that stuff. But there's intelligence that has nothing to do with a that just performance, doing well in job or whatever, a technical stuff, but there's also intelligence that makes the whole life good and a happy and meaningful and all that. There are different intelligences. Sometimes we call it a wisdom. Being wise in that kind of intelligence is a combination of a ethical quality, intellectual ability, and even spiritual quality. That wisdom kind of intelligence consists of all of these three. But being smart is different from that. We see many smart people, I see many smart people around me but not many wise ones. It is that kind of intelligence that gives us. It gives our life good. So I wonder

why? What makes smart people fools? What makes smart people fools? What blinds their eyes not to see what they're supposed to see. I meditate on it and this word came up to me. That is greed. Greed. Greed makes a smart person a fool. Greed blinds our eyes not to be able to see what you're supposed to see. When greed works in people, even though they may be very smart, they will become fools. The result is very bad.

When can we See?

When greed is taken away from your eyes, only then you can see. But when is the greed taken off from your eyes? Only when you suffer. When you suffer so much and you tell yourself, I was so stupid, I was so fool. Only then the greed is taken off from your eyes and you see yourself. Greed makes people really fool. I believe that the smartest person in the world is Jesus Christ. He was the smartest person. When I read his writing and the wisdom and all that stuff, he was the smartest person. Deep inside of us, he was able to see through, but there's one thing that he didn't have. The smartest man in the did not have one thing. You know what? That one thing is? Greed.

Lack of greed makes you smarter. Jesus did not have one thing and that was greed. The cross is a symbol of no greed. Cross symbolizes it. All the greed of human humanity is crucified on the Cross. That's what cross is, lack of greed. That's what cross is, but smart people so supposed to be smart people called that stupid, foolishness. They say Cross is foolishness and in St Paul saw that, this is what St. Paul said. "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God."

Strange, isn't it? We think they are foolish people, but they think that the cross is foolishness, but the smartest person in the world, Jesus chose the way of the cross. I believe that he chose the way of the cross because he was smart because he was smart. He chose the way of the cross and I wonder why did he choose the cross? Why did he choose the cross? The smartest man in the world chose the cross. Why? When all the smart people say the cross is foolishness and I realized that Jesus knew that the only way to experience God's power is to let go of greed. That's only way you can experience God's power. If you don't let go of greed, you cannot experience God's power. God's power can be only experience when you let

go of greed. I thank God for that. What if God gave the God's power to the greedy people? What the world would that be? But somehow God hid his power to the people who are greedy.

The power of resurrection, is hidden in the cross. Only through the cross we can experience the power of the resurrection. People who live with greed will never experienced God's power. Rather they all become victims and slaves of their own greed and the result is destruction. The result is destruction. They think they are so smart they can take care of their lives, but at the end that is the end is destruction.

On one side of the coin you see greed, but on the flip side of the coin, what you see is fear and insecurity. You have fear to see your own emptiness, your own bankruptcy within yourself. There's nothing inside you. This fear you replace with greed having more, keeping more, being better than others. There's a fear that what if my kids fall behind? What if I'm not loved and liked by others? What if I don't make it? What if I don't have enough? All this fear, they fill it with greed, so behind the greed, I see fear, worries, mistrust of oneself, anxiety about life comparison and so on. Greed will never give us true satisfaction. Greed by nature is insatiable. We'll never understand the truth that if you lose it, you'll find it. If you'll find it, you'll lose it. That's the life truth that Jesus taught us. You try to gain it, you will lose it, but if you let go, you'll find it. That truth of life, they'll never understand what it is and they'll never be content. In other words, still never be happy. Living with greed, we can never be happy. It doesn't matter how much money you have, how big your house is, how great your car is. It doesn't matter what it is, but you will never be happy.

As long as you live on greed, you replace the happiness with all these things I call that I call this stupid. St. Paul's life was very different from the life of greed. This is what he said, "not that I'm referring to being in need for. I've learned to be content. He learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little and I know what it is to have plenty in any and all circumstances. I have learned the secret of being well fed or of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need." I called that smart. I call that happy life. He's happy and he's so big that circumstances don't determine his happiness, he's so satisfied. He's so content. Doesn't matter whether he has a lot or not. I call that real smart. Greed will lead us into

dissatisfaction, complaints and corruption ultimately. There's a lot of whatever is going on in Korea right now, not only North America, all the big guys are just. They are taken into prison. There are smart people. They are smart to get to the top of the society and yet greed swallowed them up. The end is destruction.

Do Not Be a Fool

The Psalms warns us today, becoming fools, we suffer affliction, lose appetite, and draw near the gate of death. My friends, living with greed is not fun. It's not fun. It's very difficult. Always tends. Always not fulfilling. Always dissatisfaction. Always complaining. From the mouth of the people with greed. All we hear is "I wish." We don't hear, "Thank you." From their mouth, we don't hear. "Thank you." All we hear is: I wish. I wish better house. I wish better car. I wish more money. I wish more promotion. Always. I wish. Doesn't matter where they are. They will die with I wish. Let us not feed our greed. Culture that feeds on greed is not a good culture. I don't think we live in a such a good culture. Capitalism is not really the best thing for humanity. All the commercials they just create more cravings, more greed, so the kind of world that we live in, the kind of culture we are in a really good culture. We have to be aware of that. We have to be smart enough to see that it's not a good culture.

Letters in a feed on greed. Let us discipline our ourselves of letting go of our greed. Learn to let go of you greed. Let us be satisfied with small things that we already have and if we enjoy. Our children. Our good home. Good weather. Good people around you. Good community. It doesn't cost that much money. They are there. Just beautiful as they are. With thanksgiving let us enjoy our lives and live the best we can ever have. Live the best life we can ever have. As we let go of our greed, somehow we've regained the appetite. That can be the problem for me. Too much appetite. Too much food. Too much eat. But as you let go of greed, appetite comes back not only appetite of food but of life. We'll find new energy that comes from within us. If we live our life with fear before now, we can live with love. Don't be awaken after you lose everything. Now be awakened and change lifestyle. You know, once you let go of greed, you know what happens. Greed turns into vision and dream. Wonderful. Greed is for myself, but the

vision and dreams are for others and you start having this vision and dream for living for others.

The Poison of Greed

We may be busier, but we'll experience the joy and satisfaction we never experienced before. St Paul and Jesus, I mean talking a little bit, busy life. They live a busy life probably busier than any of you. They live a busy life and yet they were filled with satisfaction and joy and peace. The other day in, New York Times. This hedge fund trader. He wrote an article, he said he got \$3.5 million as a bonus and then he was complaining that he didn't get enough and then he wrote it. "This is crazy. I'm addicted. This is not good." So he wrote his article repenting about his own situation. That's not a good life. I mean \$3.5 million bonus. You complain about that? Then that's real foolishness. Greed is not good. 1987 movie Wall Street, the Gekko, that guy, "greed is good." Greed is what moves us, and then he gives us a new civilization. All that stuff. BS. Greed is not good. Greed makes us blind, takes away the energy and oppresses us, but once we let go of our greed, new life will begin. We will see the brighter side of life. I guarantee that. Future will look promising. We'll be able to see clearly the purpose of life and meaning of everything comes alive. Life comes alive. Greed is like dirty poison. It doesn't kill you right away, but it slowly kills you. It comes in and slowly permeates through all throughout all existence and we've just become greedy people and unhappy people. It always lies. It always gives false promise that I'll make your life happy. No, it will never make our life happy; is lie.

Let us be wise by letting go of our greed and finding the true beauty of life. That's what smart people do. Be Smart People. You have intelligence, but be smart people, really smart people. Only when you let go of your greed, then, only then, we'll be smarter. Let us sing together.