

St. Timothy Presbyterian Church

SPIRIT

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Sermons

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With this Spirit, We Come Alive

May 24, 2015

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Comfort and Convenience

It was the Spirit who brought him this vision and he was taken down in the middle of the valley and then he saw a pile of dry bones. It is kind of horrific scene. A valley full of dry bones. It is a vision. And then you realize that that dry bones represented the condition of the Israelites. When you see Ezekiel, he was taken into captivity by the Babylonian. Israel was destroyed by Babylon. And then they took all the people into captivity. Ezekiel was part of the group that was taken. So, they lost the country, the laws, the religion, they lost their God they lost their temple, and they lost their worship. Among that, they lost hope. The people lived in Babylon without much hope. But today Ezekiel is telling us, I saw dry bones, but in the whole process, Ezekiel found hope in the Spirit of God. Only in the Spirit of God, Ezekiel found hope. This is what Ezekiel said at the end of the vision. I'll put my Spirit within you and you will come alive. You shall live. He saw the dry bones, but when the Spirit came upon the dry bones, somehow the dry bones came alive. That's what the Spirit does. The Spirit makes our lives come alive. Spirit is Ruach in Hebrew. It is wind, breath, and life. So, when the Spirit comes to us, it makes our soul, Spirit in our whole existence, our whole self, come alive.

You know the modern life is great. Life has become so easy and so convenient. I can't believe that in this small device called a cell phone, there are more than 100 books. Can you believe there are more than 100 books in this small device? I carry it everywhere. If I had to carry 100 books with me, that will be pretty tough. And I do most of my reading on the phone. I can't read a book anymore; the words are too small and you can't read if it's dark. With a phone, that's not the problem. So, most of my reading I do on my phone, most of my studying I do it, and sometimes I even write sermons on my phone. It is very modern. Life is comfortable and convenient, but even though my life has become so comfortable and convenient, I cannot say necessarily that made our life more fulfilling. Are we more fulfilling than those people will live 50 years ago? I can confidently say that our life is very different from the people who lived 50 years ago. But the fulfillment of life, in better terms, the sense of fulfillment with your

life, I'm not quite sure on that. But still, the modern life is obsessed with convenience, not much interested in the enrichment of life. Even though we have so many things that make our lives very comfortable and convenient, we are looking for more comfort and more convenience,

Are we Satisfied?

But we are not much interested in the deep enrichment of life. Modern life provides us with fun and pleasure, but we become more and more estranged from ourselves, separated from ourselves. We do not know what our heart's desire is. We do not know who we are. And sometimes we don't even care who we are. We do not know our own emptiness and hollowness. Modern life constantly has many distractions. It has a lot of things, so we don't even think about our own emptiness and hollowness. We have deep empty space, but we don't look at it. We don't have time to look at it. We just made ourselves distracted so that, we don't need to look at our own hollowness, emptiness because it's scary to see how empty we have become. We learned not to say it. We learned to forget about it. We live just doing what we're supposed to do. There is no such thing as self-discovery. And I wonder to myself, how can you truly enjoy your life when you don't know yourself. How can you truly enjoy your life when you don't see what's going on in your heart?

How can anybody be fully satisfied when you don't feel about yourself? Sometimes when I look at people, including myself, we have become numb. We have become desensitized. We do a lot of things, but nothing makes us come alive. "Yes, I'm living. I'm alive. We don't know. Yeah. Another day I just do this and that. Yeah. Yeah. I have to make living another day." There's no such thing as, "yes! Good life!" Even though we did not lose our country, we're losing ourselves. Even though we were not taken into captivity, we have become a prisoner of ourselves. We have become like dry bones. My friends, I think we need to find our own spirituality. I need to find my own spirituality. Real spirituality, no religiosity. I'm not much interested in religiosity. It is good, but I think that's very different from spirituality. I think we need to really find our own spirituality and cultivate it. We need to find the Spirit that makes us alive.

A lot of people don't do much to cultivate their spirituality. Even though we know that spirituality is important, that we say that is important, we don't do anything about cultivating our spirituality. Then it becomes just habit just

living like that. Not much sense of fulfillment or enrichment. Oh, my goodness, I don't have many years to live on 57. The rest of my life. I'm not going to just do lots of things and just let it pass. I want to live a fulfilling life, every moment of my life. I want to really experience fulfillment.

The Spirit

Today's the day of Pentecost. As a Christian, you are celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit. My friends, without the Holy Spirit, Christianity can never break through persecutions and hardships they went through. You know, when Jesus taught them, they didn't understand until the end, until they received the Holy Spirit. Only then they experienced the power and courage. And with that power and courage, they were able to, to break through hardships, persecutions, and difficulties. Christianity did not just come about. If Holy Spirit did not come, I don't think there would be Christianity. For these mundane, weak, and vulnerable disciples, the Holy Spirit came down upon them and they, all of a sudden, they were strengthened. And then they persevered, and they broke through the hardships, persecutions, and difficulties. That's why we have Christianity now. The Spirit was with them and the Spirit strengthened them, and the Spirit gave them the life force to go forth through the storm.

I do believe that the same Spirit will strengthen you and give you courage so that you can break through the storm. we can be strong people with the help of the Spirit. This is what Saint Paul said. "Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words and God who searches the heart knows what the mind of this period is because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good, for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."

The Spirit helps us. The Spirit intercedes us. Interceding meaning prays. When you're vulnerable, when you're not able to do anything, it is the Spirit who prays for you, who is with you, who intercedes for you. God gave us the Spirit. We are not an orphan and we are not alone. You don't serve God alone. If you serve God alone, you'll be tired. You'll be exhausted. There's only so much you can do as a human being, but when you are filled with Spirit, then you can do so much more. Christianity is not about what I do. Christianity is about what the Spirit does within me.

This is what our Lord Jesus said, “and I’ll ask the father and I will ask the father and he will give you another advocate to be with you forever. 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 here. I will not leave you orphaned. I’m coming to you.” This is a promise. As he left the earth, he left the Spirit with us. We don’t see the Spirit. The world cannot receive the Spirit, but we the believers of Jesus Christ, we received the spirit. The Spirit abides with us and within us. Now the Spirit is given to not just a few individuals who has spiritual experiences, the spirit is given to all of us who believe. And with that Spirit, you can do amazing things with that Spirit. More than what Jesus did. All his life Jesus did everything with the help of the Spirit. He didn’t do it by himself. It’s not that Jesus was a special person and he could do all these things, Jesus completely depended on the Spirit and the Spirit, helped him do all those things, and that same Spirit is given to us and we’ll be able to do what Jesus did and even more.

Potential

This is what Jesus said, “very truly, I you the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do, and in fact, we’ll do great greater works than these.” Think about it. You will do greater things than what Jesus did. There is this nagging voice within me that says we are not doing as well as you’re supposed to. We could do much better, but somehow, we are saddled with mediocrity. We’re just settling with mediocrity because they’re so used to mediocrity and instead of going all the way they are content with the mediocrity. In other words, we ourselves are the stumbling block. Jesus said, we can do more than what he did.

You have a great potential. You have great gifts and talents, but somehow, you’re paralyzed. You’re limited. Your thinking is limited. When you’re thinking is limited, your life becomes limited. Whether with your work or with your life, with your performance, everything, you’re just limited. What the Spirit does is opens up, expands you, brings you out so that you can live out your full potential. That’s what the Spirit does. Cultivating the spirituality is very simple. Be always in the Spirit. When you listen to the sermon, listen in Spirit. Otherwise, you won’t understand. When I preached this sermon, I preach in Spirit. I’m aware of Spirit right here with me. Take time to be in the Spirit. Discipline yourself to be always conscious of the Spirit in you. Everyday take even 10 minutes, 15 minutes, to be conscious in the Spirit.

Just sit there and enjoy the presence of the Spirit. When you've read, read in Spirit. When you work, work in Spirit. When you think, think in Spirit. All of a sudden, your life will come alive. Your life will be expended. The Spirit will open your eyes and lead you into the truth. And the Spirit will awaken your soul and the Spirit or give you the courage that defeats your fear. Fear is one of the biggest stumbling block we all have, but the Spirit will fight off that fear that paralyzes you and gives you the courage. The Spirit will enliven your soul and your feel deeply satisfied and experienced the full richness of your life.

Reflection

By ourselves, we have no choice but to become lonely, empty and hollow, but with the Spirit, we'll feel enriched. Everything comes alive. Black and white becomes colour. I forgot that commercial. Black and white becomes with a Spirit or drink or whatever. It's like this with the Spirit. Our life comes alive. When the Spirit touches our lives, everything comes alive. I realized that the Spirit doesn't necessarily changes your circumstances, but the Spirit changes you, so that your attitude, the way you see your circumstances, become very different. The early disciples, when they received the Spirit, their life was not necessarily easier. The same persecution was there, but they were able to change because the way they look at their circumstances and the way they look at their persecution changed. They had courage, had the strength to persevere. And they persevered through. This year's theme is Journey to Fullness. You can never have a journey to fullness on your own. You can only have a journey to fullness with the Spirit. So, my friends give it a try. Give yourself fully in the power of the Spirit. Let the Spirit do the amazing work through yourself and through your life and see how big you can become. Stretch your boundary. Don't limit yourself with the boundary that you set up, break it, stretch it, and see how far you can go. See how deep you can get. If you're a writer, stretch yourself. Be a creative writer. If you're a magician, stretch yourself. A businessman, stretch yourself. A teacher, stretch yourself, be creative with your teaching. Whatever you do, what God wants from you, is for you to live out the full potential that God has in store for you.

Unforgivable Sin

June 7, 2015

Mark 3:20-35

Unforgivable

To me, people's utter can be forgiven, but if you blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, that sin will not have forgiveness. It is a serious charge Jesus uttered, and since it is a very serious charge, we have to take it seriously too. We cannot just take it lightly and casually; whatever sins can be forgiven. But when you blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, then that sin will never be forgiven eternally. What does it mean to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit? So, I to really reflect on this, what did Jesus mean by uttering blasphemes against God? Against the Holy Spirit is like swearing at Holy Spirit or saying bad things about the Holy Spirit, what is it to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit? Just after he said that there's a little note, and this was what Mark said. Mark said for they had said he has an unclean spirit. The people said Jesus had an unclean spirit. And Mark thinks that because they said that Jesus told them that they blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. So, I was reflecting on this. Was Jesus angry? Because the people accused him of being demon possessed or gone out of his mind or were they angry at? Was he angry? So, he blurted out this thing that your sin will never be forgiven or blaspheme against all the spirit is a kind of one kind of act that you do. So, because of that act, you will never be forgiven eternally. To both questions. My answer is no. I don't think Jesus was angry. I don't think it is just one kind of action or words that you say against all the spirit.

And so that's what we're going to focus on today. Jesus cast out demons and he healed many people. He did all kinds of things that we normal human beings will not be able to do. His teaching was amazing. He showed tremendous power of God, so people were quite amazed at this man, Jesus. What sort of man is this? Who does all these things, but at the same time, when you look at Jesus, Jesus not only did heal and exorcised demons and all that stuff, Jesus did a lot of things that irritated and frustrated people. Jesus did a lot of things that normal Jews would not do at that time. Like breaking sabbath, or eating food without clean hands, or associating with sinners and drinking and eating with them. And then

normal Jews saw Jesus. He's supposed to be the leader, but he doesn't look like the leader. On the one hand, yes, he was powerful. He did all kinds of wonderful things as a leader. He had charisma, but on the other hand, they cannot really accept him as their leader because Jesus was breaking all kinds of traditions. So, they cannot really pinpoint, yes this is Jesus. They cannot really pinpoint who Jesus was. They had a hard time figuring out who Jesus was. In other words, Jesus was too big to be contained in their well-defined small world. They cannot really contain Jesus. They could not figure out who Jesus was. Jesus was like them also at the same time, she just was so different from them.

Trying to Grasp God

People lived in their well-defined small world. We try to define our own small world. In the well-defined small world. There is logic and formula that they use to make a judgment, to assess and to figure out. So, they had this logic and formula. This is the formula: if you do one, two, three, then you're a good person, but otherwise, you're a bad person. If you do these things or you're a religious person or if you do that, you're not a religious person and if you do this, then you have salvation. But if you don't do that, you don't have salvation. They have their own logic and formula to figure out who the good people are, who the bad people are, and then with their logic and formula, Jesus cannot fit in their logic or formula. They could not really figure out who Jesus was. You know, in the English language, there is understanding and there is comprehending the word comprehend comes from the original word, prehendere and prehendere meaning a grasp you put in your small hand and then you look at it, "ah... now I comprehend. Prehendere"

With Jesus, they could not do that. They cannot put Jesus in their own small hand. And then just look around, turn it around and say "oh, I know this is Jesus." Jesus was too big to be grasped in their small hand, in that sense, comprehend and understand are two different things. In understanding God. If you try to understand God by grasping it, if you try to understand God, by putting God in your small hands and looking around and saying", oh, I know this is this God". If you have that attitude, you can never understand God, my friend. You will never be able to fully understand God because God will never be able to come into your small hand. In the same way, if you try to understand other people with your own logic and

have well defined, and already set my mindset. If you try to understand anyone, you can never understand anyone but yourself.

With very fixed thinking, narrow minded fix thinking. You can never understand the world. You can never understand other people. You can never understand God, especially God. To understand God, it's almost like not putting God in your grasp. You're reaching out and barely try to touch God. You reach out as far as you can. Your imagination and everything, but still you can't quite get it, but at your fingertip, you feel the sensation of the presence of God. You barely understand who God is, never in your hand. You can see it. You cannot see it. You can touch it. You cannot touch it. There you start understanding who god is. That's why it's sometimes frustrating for some people, some people are such control freaks, so they have to have everything in their own hand. And now I understand, but God, you can never do that. Michelangelo, I think he expressed that kind of thing very well in this picture. When you look at it you see the two hands reaching out to each other and does not meet. So, try to understand God in that way.

Reaching out to Understand

I think that picture tells us a lot about reaching out with an open hand. The scribes did not try to understand Jesus. They tried to comprehend Jesus. They try to put God in their own hands. They did not try to understand Jesus. They tried to fit Jesus in their small world. As we discussed last week, we try to fit God into our lives rather than us fitting our lives in God. No matter how hard they tried, they could not understand Jesus. You know, human beings are strange. When you cannot understand. They don't humbly acknowledge their ignorance, but rather, what do they do? They said that he was demon possessed. Here's an unclean spirit, very convenient way of things that you don't know, very convenient things to do when you cannot really understand you demonize. Other people who are very, very different from you. Well not like you, they are demon possessed. They are bad. You said, I'm just trying to understand Jesus. They spit out Jesus saying that he was demon possessed. That the attitude is attitude of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. You already have fixed thought logic. Formula and idea, and everything has to fit in there. If it doesn't fit there, then it's evil.

Even God has to fit in there. If God doesn't fit in there, then I won't accept it. Then you will remain in your own small world and you remain in your sin. It can never enter into the bigger world of God. No matter how hard you are trying. So many people have this fixed thinking about themselves, about life. They think I know it all, so they never opened their hearts and minds to the new world that God is bringing to us. That's why we cannot hear God. We cannot enjoy the world of God. That's why Jesus kept saying, let those who have ears to hear, let them hear. Jesus was so frustrated because they did not have ears to hear. Can we say hundred percent that life is exactly as I perceive and there's nothing beyond that. The life you're living is the best life, can we say 100 percent? We don't need to change how we are living. We just have to live the way I have lived all this time and that is the best way to live and that is the way to salvation. Are 100 percent sure on that? Then, if that is not the case, what makes us not even consider changes? Is it our stubbornness, is it our pride or is it our laziness? Then we don't change. We won't change. If you are not 100 percent sure, then we should change our attitude. Not the I know it all attitude. Not the I know the best attitude. When we were younger. We may might have done that, but as you experienced more mysteries of life, complexities of life, we cannot say that anymore.

As we get older, as we experience more about life, we need to learn the humility of accepting the world bigger than the world we know. They demonized Jesus. It was the most convenient way to do it. But I hope that we don't do that. I hope that we don't reject things. There are very different, from what I think we need to open our hearts and minds to be able to receive what Jesus offers. Yesterday, I had a Bible study in the evening. Most of them were in their fifties, and then they were all saying, you know, I want to get older nicely. I don't want to be a cranky nagging old person. I want to get old gracefully and beautifully. And then they said, I want to be more accepting. I realized that there are all kinds of people and I want to accept them as they are. You will encounter all kinds of different things in your life. Don't fix life with a small world that you have created. You will become a small person. Whoever is different, whatever is different, learn from it.

Reflection

When Jesus speaks something very different from your idea of a good life, think about it again. Maybe there's a truth or there is a mystery there. I

hope that we can all be open to the guidance of the spirit. The spirit will guide you exactly in the way you expect because you are not God. The spirit is going to sometimes make you very uncomfortable. The spirit maybe sometimes challenges your thinking. Even the spirit will guide you into the bigger world. When you reject it, that's blaspheming against the spirit and you remain in your own small world. Instead of experiencing the wonderful world that the spirit provides for you.

All of you are beautiful people. Beautiful talents. You are much more capable, and much more talented than me and I envy you, but you have to be open to the guidance of the spirit and the spirit will surprise you. You can be a much, much bigger person than who you are. Bigger, not in the sense of success in terms of the quality of a person, and I think you can do that as you let go of your fixed thinking and let the spirit guide you in your life. Day by day why don't you practice that. Spirit? How do you want to guide me today? I will surrender myself. Before, I lived like this, I want to surrender myself and see how you guide me, how you lead me. I want to experience you. I want to experience God. I want to experience the beauty of life. So, let us think together with that in mind.

A Bird whose Legs are Tied to a String

May 1, 2016

Mark 10:17-31

Eternal Life

A man came to Jesus and asked this question, good teacher. What must I do to inherit eternal life? An important question. How do we inherit eternal life? How can we have eternal life? Probably there are all kinds of theories and whatever you heard from people, from churches, from when you're young, Sunday school or you have your own theory about eternal life and all that stuff. It's a very important question though. How do we have eternal life? I hope that through this scripture passage, we may reflect on how to inherit eternal life. He was a good moral man, since he was young. He lived with a good conscience and strong moral responsibility, but that didn't seem to be enough to inherit eternal life. Somehow Jesus says to him, you lack one thing. Go sell what you own and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me. The man could not do it. Mark gives us this picture. When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving for he had many possessions. He was shocked and we're all shocked if we have to give away everything that we have and follow Jesus, and then only then you will have eternal life who will be saved, who will be able to have the eternal life, they were shocked and even the disciples were shocked. This is what the disciples said. There were greatly astounded and said to one another, then who can be saved?

It is a very hard passage to accept as a truth. What is Jesus' word? We have to take it seriously. It is truth that Jesus spoke. Is giving away everything a condition for inheriting eternal life, is being poor, a necessary condition for entering the Kingdom of God. Everyone has to be poor to be able to enter the Kingdom of God. Can rich people go to heaven? This is what Jesus said, "children how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God." Why is it so difficult for the rich people to enter the Kingdom of God? What is it about rich people that it is so hard for them to enter the Kingdom of God? It is something that we need to all think about, especially when money seems to be the most important goal for many people in our world, especially in this capitalistic world. Money is

the most important thing and people go for money. They're life goal is to make money.

What does money give us? Money gives us privilege and power in this world. The world we live in, the money has a pretty good power. You can buy a lot of things. It gives you the buying power. With power, what you get is privileges you become VIP and these days VIP is not good enough. So, we have VVIP. So, in this world, it is hard to let go of money because we hate to let go of all the privileges that come with it. People say, why should I? It's the money I earned. I worked for it. I studied hard. I made it. Why should I give it away? I'm entitled to have this money. What's wrong with enjoying the privileges that money can give us, but my friends, there is a cost in everything. There is a cost, for the sake of privilege, there's something that we lose. We have to pay, what is that? I think that is freedom. As we get privilege, we lose freedom. We cannot buy freedom with money. Money does not free you, but rather binds you. That was what this rich man showed to us. He was bound to his wealth, so he went away sad, grieving. Money became a string that tied the legs of this man. The bird is capable of flying freely, but when his legs are tied by a string, it won't be able to fly.

Anselm, one of the early church fathers, one day he was walking on the street and he saw a young child playing with a bird. He tied the bird's legs and he played with a bird. He let the bird fly for a while, the bird trying to fly in that. They bring it down to the ground and the bird fell to the ground. And then he tries to fly again, and he brings it down to the ground and the child was so happy and then he was playing with this so friendly and enjoyed it very much and some saw that for a while and he cried, and he said, "that's what Satan does to us." Satan lets us fly for a while but brings it down to the ground.

That's what money does. It looks like it gives us freedom, but it doesn't, for a while we fly, but it brings us down to the ground. Money cannot give us freedom. What we need is not privilege. What we need is freedom. Eternal life is not about privilege. Eternal life is about freedom. Then my friend. What does freedom look like? What does freedom look like? It looks like this, freedom looks like freedom to have all and the freedom to give it all up. That's what freedom is. That's what freedom looks like, to have it all and freedom to give it all up. Freedom to live in plenty and freedom to live

in want. Isn't that the freedom that St Paul was talking about, this is what he said, "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 and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

Freedom in all Circumstances

That is freedom. That is freedom. It is the freedom of being content in all circumstances. That was what Jesus was talking about. Paul said, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me," and that's exactly what Jesus said in today's passage. For mortals, it is impossible, but not for God, for God, all things are possible, isn't this the same thing. They're talking about the same thing. That freedom is not possible with money, that freedom is possible only with God. Our goal of life is not accumulating more. But it is to be free from what binds us. Let us not be blinded young people. Let us not be blinded. Our life goal is not to accumulate more. Our life goal is to be free from what binds us. Freedom to be content in all circumstances is much better than the privilege that we can buy with money. There are things that you can buy with money and there are things that are priceless. One of the commercials has that right? It'll label how much they are, how much they are and at the end something is priceless. Is it Mastercard? Okay, there's things that you can buy. There are things which are priceless. Freedom, eternal life, salvation that's priceless. Eternal life is not entering into the world of privilege. Eternal life is entering into the world of freedom. What is the best way to achieve that freedom. I was thinking about it and I realized that the best way to achieve that freedom is to give away. Give away what you have, not all at once, but little by little, learning to give whatever we have learned to give. That's where we can learn freedom. To our children, don't teach them to be successful. Teach them to give. We are teaching wrong things to our children. Don't teach them to be successful. Teach them to give.

Freedom from Wealth

Last Friday I had dinner with church members and they don't come to church anymore, but he was saying this, "why do I have more money? Why do I have more resources and children? People in India don't have anything. It's not fair. "So, they cut down their houses, they moved to a smaller house, save their money, they're into giving away, charity and all

that because he said it's the human thing to do. It is the right thing to do. Why do I have more? We are blessed to be a blessing. You are given enough to give enough.

I'm reading a book by Tracy Kidder and he's a Pulitzer winner. Mountains beyond mountains. He's talking about Dr Paul Farmer, he is a Harvard graduate and he teaches at Harvard School of medicine. Especially infectious diseases. But he got a room a near Harvard University. There's a church. He rented a room there, so he lives there in that church. And then most of his time he goes to Haiti, Peru, Cuba, Russia. And he really helps out especially people who have infectious diseases. And as I shared a little bit yesterday, and at the mission dinner, this is what he says, the only real nation is humanity. The only real nation is humanity. I think that's wonderful life. Whatever we have, giveaway, whatever we have, we share. That's the human thing to do. That's what Jesus taught us. That's freedom, true freedom. Don't be bound to wealth, be free from wealth. Don't be bound by North American lifestyle, learn to give away.

What are you Doing?

July 17, 2016

1 Kings 19:11-13

Life is a Drama

Before we read the scripture, to give a little background about the scripture, Elijah is one of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament and just fought against 450 prophets on Mount Carmel, becoming the greatest victory. But somehow what you are going to hear today is very strange, he was really depressed, and he was really down. The word of the Lord is taken from First Kings Chapter 19 verse 11 to 13 he said "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by there. Now, there was a great wind so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind and after the wind and earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake and after the earthquake or fire, but the Lord was not in the fire and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?". After the fire, "a sound of sheer silence", that is a very strange kind of phrase.

You know, every Sunday we gather here together, not just to reflect about being religious. I don't come here to just talk about religion every Sunday, I come up here thinking about life. Once a week, we gather together, we think about life, what do we believe about life? what do you believe about myself? what do we believe about God? what is the core thing that defines my existence? That's something that I like to reflect every Sunday, we want to reflect on life. Life is not always good, I wish it was always good, but life is not always good. Not always bad either, but it's not always good. It's too bad that life is not always good, especially life with God. Even that is not always good. Maybe that's the nature of life, that is a deal of life. Life is not always good whether you believe it or not, whether you believe in God or not, whether you're a good person or not sometimes a tragedy happens. Those innocent children were killed in Nice, didn't do anything bad. There was probably a lot of good people there, but all these things happen. Why did these things happen to me?

There is no answer, life is not always good. Whether you're a good person or not, whether you're a believer or not, that's why life is a drama. Life is good and bad. Together they make up a drama. Life is a rhythm, there are ups and downs in life. Life cannot always be up nor always down. There are always ups and downs and there's a very famous picture that you all know "If there are no ups and downs in your life. It means you're dead", flat line. That is being dead. So, life together, ups and downs and good and bad make a rhythm. Life is like a drama, drama in the sense that life isn't mechanical, predictable and controllable. Tomorrow? you don't know, those people who went to Nice probably they went out to celebrate the great lights. It would have been a fun exciting night, but it turned into a nightmare. Life is not predictable.

Life is not predictable

I went down to Boston this year to see my daughter who gave birth to a son, that itself was a drama to me. As I shared before, this really happened, she almost did not make it to the world when he was born. I was at a church and then the doctor called me and then I rushed to the hospital and the doctor told me she has a 10 percent chance to live, you want to do the surgery? c-section right now? you have a 10 percent chance. I said, "Of course", 10 percent even if it was one percent, I'll take that. I still remember my prayers, I mean every day, every moment I was at the chapel at a women's college hospital praying for the survival of my child because she was waiting for the blood and there was no blood in the world. The doctor told me that today's probably the last day, "If blood doesn't arrive today, your child will die", and so I prayed and prayed. I remember my prayer from that time, I said to God, "Lord, I don't pray for the perfectly healthy baby, probably that will be my greed, but this humble prayer, I pray that you please help me so that the child at least doesn't get brain damage and that will be fine for me, I can take it".

At then at the very end of the hospital, a life there, I came out with a perfectly healthy baby. I couldn't even imagine it. So, when I went to hospital and she gave very easy birth, I said "Are you hurting?", she replied saying she was fine and she gave birth, and all was well. I then held my grandson and said to myself again, "Life is drama". Life is trauma, it's not always good, it's not always bad. There's no formula. Life is not always good, but we should never give up. That's what I believe about life. That's what I believe about myself. Life's not always good, but we should never

What are you Doing?

give up, do you believe that? I hope that you believe that. I feel like giving up sometimes, many times. I feel like many times especially when we face challenges, and they are too difficult to overcome we want to give up.

Prophet Elijah

Today's story, Prophet Elijah was not just a prophet, he was the prophet, a prophet. He was like Michael Jordan in basketball, or he was like tiger woods in golf. He was the prophet. He defeated 450 false prophets in Mount Carmel. He won the biggest victory. You know when Jesus went up to the mountain and then experienced a transfiguration to representative and old testament figures come out of there? Who are they? One is Moses and the other was Elijah, very powerful figures, but one woman threatened him because she didn't like what Elijah did on Mount Carmel, she threatened to kill Elijah. I mean at this time. He was really scared. He probably received all kinds of threats throughout his life, but he was fine. He was able to handle all of those, but this time he was really, really scared. He was running away. He was vulnerable. Human beings are like that. Sometimes we can take any challenge in life no problem, and when difficulties come, we can fight and fight and fight, but one woman, just a little problem comes and attacks you. You get so scared, you lose all your confidence.

This time you say to yourself, I don't think I can make it this time. All this time I have made it, but not this time. Maybe that's what human beings are like. He came under a solitary broom tree and this was what he said, "It's enough now, oh Lord is enough is enough, take away my life for I am no better than my ancestors". Then he laid down under the broom tree and fell asleep. It's like saying I give up, even the greatest profit experience, this kind of vulnerability, this kind of brokenness. All the figures in the Bible, they are not invincible people. We're special people, they are like you and me. Same as us and he feels so vulnerable, but you said, I give up. I'm not going to do anything anymore. I'm going to just lie down here. I sleep. If I'm going to die, I'm going to die. I don't care anymore.

No one is invincible. Not a single one, they just pretend to be invincible, they are all vulnerable in a certain way. That's what life is like. That's what we human beings are like, but Elijah was totally beaten down. When you are totally beaten down, that itself is not necessarily bad. Why? because at that moment, Elijah, he heard the voice. Sometimes that's when God

speaks to you, that's when we hear God. God always speaks to us, but only when we are totally beaten down. That's when we hear God's voice more clearly than ever before. Not a loud voice, but small voice. Rather the sound of silence. Elijah heard the sound of sheer silence. The scripture says, after the fire a sound of sheer silence, he heard Greek wind that split the mountain. There was an earthquake and there was a fire, but Elijah could not hear God in those loud voices, in loud noises. He could not hear God's voice, but when there was complete silence after that, he heard the sound of silence. When there was complete silence, he heard it, and this is what the scripture says. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle because he heard something. That's life. Sometimes we hear when everything is so quiet, when it is noisy, we cannot hear, but when there's complete silence, sometimes we hear better.

How do you hear the sound of silence? That's like oxymoron. Silence is no sound and sound of silence is sound of no sound, it doesn't make sense, but somehow, we all know we can hear silence. We can hear the voice. When everything is silent, you know my friend. I realize the more important thing to hear, is not the noise or the sound that is audible. The more important sound is the silence. Sound of silence. I realized that I hear what I need to hear in silence. It then is deep inner voice. When everything is silent, it speaks from the heart it speaks from the depth of your soul. God often speaks to our heart. When it is noisy. We cannot hear what's in there, but when everything is silent, we can hear the deep inner voice. Elijah was able to hear the voice deep within him and what did the voice say? Simple, "Elijah, what are you doing? what are you doing lying there?". Sometimes when we hear the voice, the voice tells us, what are you doing? What are you doing with your life?

He was completely tired and exhausted from running away from his life. He was just sitting under the tree. He's sitting on his life. He did not do anything with his life, it's not that he was making his life looking at the vision, he was just sitting on his life doing nothing. God asked "Elijah, what are you doing? Elijah?" and said three things. First of all, you're not alone. There are other prophets too who do the great things, who do great things and not so great things. Thirdly, God said "I am with you, I will give you strength and let you know what you need to do". Very clearly, he spoke to Elijah. Elijah heard what he needed to hear, sound of silence. It's not audible and you cannot hear it when you're totally confident, arrogant and

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thinking that you're capable. When you are full of yourself, you cannot hear the sound of silence, but when you're broken, and you become humble, you can hear the sound of silence. We have to learn to hear the sound of silence. Jesus always said, "Let those who have ears to hear, let them hear". I hope that all of us have the ears to hear and become people who are able to hear and listen to the sound of silence. When the prodigal son, when he was at home, he was not able to hear anything, but when he went far away from home, he lost everything. He was completely broken down. He had to even steal pig's food, and this is when he heard the sound of silence.

Sound of Silence

When we are completely down, it's not always bad. When you guys are down, hear the sound of silence, that's what I believe about life. God works in that way. To me, that was my life, my life was like that when I was completely down, and God spoke to me. God spoke to me what I never heard before, and God will still speak to you in a very small voice sometimes in silence. I hoped that you all are able to hear that voice. That voice is like the star in the dark.

Wind, Spirit and New Life

November 6, 2016

John 3:8

We are Born of the Spirit

We have the spirit. We are born of the spirit. That's what Jesus is saying. You're not born of just flesh and bones. You are born of the spirit. And Christians are those who recognize that we are born of the spirit and they call it born again, but that simply means born of the spirit, recognize that you are born of the spirit. You're not just a body. You have the spirit. And Jesus describes what it looks like to live as a person who is born of the spirit. And he visually uses wind as an example to describe what that life is like. It is very interesting that he used the wind, the word wind, because the word in Hebrew is ruah, ruah can also mean the spirit.

So, the same word ruah can be both the wind or spirit. So, Jesus is talking about the person's life of the spirit, like the wind. And he describes that. So, you hear the sound of it, but you don't know where he comes from. And where it goes to, and the wind chooses as it wills. So, the wind blows. I mean, here the word that comes to my mind is you do not know that particular passage. You do not know, so as a person who's born of the spirit, you don't know everything. You recognize that you do not know.

Culture of Knowledge

I mean, it's a very counter cultural message. We're living in a culture where knowledge is very highly valued. Modern people love knowledge. They love to know. Look at the Google. I mean, the reason they're so successful is because they can quench the thirst of people's desire to know. So, Google is growing. I mean you punch in a few words or a few phrases. A whole knowledge thing comes down, most likely in one page, the first page you can find what you want. If you put the right words into it. There's a Korean drama called K2 and in K2 there's a cloud nine. In the cloud nine, there is a special room when you go in there. Not everybody can go in, only a person who has a special privilege can go in and then there's a special room inside which is covered by windows. And then within it, people are talking outside. You cannot hear them. And then there in the room, you just ask any question and the answers come with all the description and pictures and

everything. But that place is a controlling center. From there, all kinds of conspiracy, all kinds of things are happening.

You know modern people are obsessed with knowledge, not to use knowledge for the benefit of humanity necessarily. More often, this knowledge is used to dominate control, to subdue others. That's why they want knowledge so much. Having knowledge is having control. You have to know exactly what's going on in your life. Otherwise you will lose control of your life, so you want to know, so that you can control your life, and I realized that is an attribute of human beings right, from the beginning. When you look at Genesis, the first sin the human beings made, committed was the desire to know, and Satan used that desire to know, in other words, for them, the desire to know is the desire to control. This is what Satan said to the first human being, you will not die, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God knowing good and evil, so then knowledge and knowing is to take control over their lives on their own. I think modern world has maximized the desire of the first human being to the extreme, the modern world, nurtures the mind, but not the spirit. The mind without the spirit. I think it's very dangerous. It's like knowledge without love. When you have lots of knowledge without love, you know what that will do? It's very scary. You give so much knowledge to the person who has no love? You don't know what that person may do with that knowledge, and when I look at modern world it's like this, we keep nurturing mind, the knowledge, knowledge, knowledge, but we don't nurture, love, compassion, mercy, these things we don't nurture. Then what will humanity become?

You know, if they're ignorant, that's okay, but if they are so smart, so knowledgeable, and yet they don't have love, that kind of world is a very scary world to me. You know, I thank God that God is hidden to those who have a desire to rule, control and dominate. If you have that desire to rule, control and dominate, you can never know God. God is hidden to you. Conceptually you know God, but deep inside you can never know God. If you have so much desire to control over your life, you can never know God. You cannot experience God in that way because God hides himself to those who have this desire to control, dominate and rule. Thomas Aquinas saw it right when he said, "the extreme of human knowledge of God is to know that we do not know God." That's the extreme human knowledge of God. The only way for you to truly know God and experienced God is to

give up your desire to rule, control and dominate, but come to the light with desire to love and serve. Then you will know God.

Listen to Your Heart

Otherwise, you can never know God. That's why I feel that in the modern world, the problem is people don't know God. We don't know God. We know God only by name. We don't truly experience God. We don't know God because we have so much desire to control over our lives. In that way, we can never know God. You know, as I look back, I had a few turning points in my life that has shaped my life and made a big change in direction. Those turning points were like moments that I saw light in a way, and that changed the course of my life and I don't think I made those turning points. I don't think it was just purely my intellectual decision to live my life in a certain way. I think there was something in my heart at that time that led me to make that decision and that something in the heart, I call it a revelation, it is only to me, not to anybody else. It spoke to me personally. It was revealed to me. So, it's not something I decided, but there's something else outside that planted that thought. And in my heart, I do believe that you will have that too in your life. At that time, I didn't know where my decision would lead me at that time, but when I look back, God used that, miraculously to shape my life and to lead my life. It is wonderful when you look back at your life in that way, oh, those turning points really shaped my life. And you realize there's something more than your intellectual understanding. There is something more powerful that unravels your life. So, I do believe that life gets unfolded.

Life is not something that you make decisions. Life gets unfolded as you live your lives. As you listen to your heart very carefully, God has put something in that heart and when you are able to read that, then life gets unfolded and then you realize the mystery of life. Wow, that's wonderful. Even now I don't know what's waiting for me, ahead of me, tomorrow or next year or I don't know how many years, but I don't know what's ahead of me, but I have confidence that it's going to be all right because I have experienced the last almost 60 years and then I think I'll be all right. God will guide me. So, I don't have much fear in that way. I have confidence in that because I know I have confidence because I believe.

Hear what is in Your Heart

So even now, you have to learn to hear what's in your heart. If you don't, if you're not able to hear us in your heart, you can never be led by God. God wants to lead you. God wants to guide you, don't ignore what God put in your heart, and sometimes we don't know life and that's all right even though we don't know life, but we need to hear what's in our heart and then that mystery will be unfolded as you live your lives. And then that's freedom that you experience. Another phrase that comes to my mind is the wind blows where it chooses, the wind blows where it chooses. I don't know exactly where the wind will blow. I don't know where it comes from or where it goes to, but I do know that the wind chooses its own course. And I realized that God chooses his own way. And I have trust in God's choice. I'm thankful that it's not my choice. It is God's choice and God will decide where to blow. Just because I don't know what the wind does, that does not mean that the wind will stop blowing, on the surface. It may look like nothing is going on, but underneath, the wind continuously blows wherever it chooses.

That is how God works. God moves where God chooses. You know often we get discouraged because of the outcome of our life, and often we get bothered by the uncertainties of the future. Often, we get tired and drained because of the endless challenges, and often we are let down by our own shortcomings and failures. In spite of all that God moves where God chooses. That's wonderful news. That's the good news, in spite of my shortcomings. In spite of the outcome so far, God chooses where He will move. When I look at the world around me these days, I get quite discouraged. All the things that are going on. How many children must die for people to truly recognize the cruelty of war and the cruelty of human greed? How long? How many people have to die for humanity to recognize that we need to reconcile, we need to live in harmony. We need to love each other. How many people have to die for us to recognize that? Ezekiel, old prophet, long time ago he cried out like this, "mortal, you're living in the midst of a rebellious house who have eyes to see but do not see with ears to hear, but do not hear."

I believe that Bob Dylan was inspired by this passage, Bob Dylan is a singer. One of my favorite singers who just got Nobel prize when he got the Nobel prize, all day I listened to Bob Dylan. From the morning until the evening, you know he was a Jew, who was born Jew, but later he became

a Christian. And he has a lot of biblical image and his songs reflect a lot of his biblical image. And then I wish that we had people like Bob Dylan in our congregation. Why don't you guys write some songs, beautiful songs. You can do that. And that's what I like to do in our church, I like to sing songs that we ourselves have made because that reflects our culture, our religion, our spirituality. You have a spiritual sensitivity. I hope that you have some confidence and start writing songs. And so, every Sunday we can sing that song. And when Bob Dylan when he was 21 years old, only 21 years, you know, he's saying this song. "Yes. And how many times must the cannon balls fly before they are forever banned? Yes. And how many times can a man turn his head and pretend that he just does not see? Yes. And how many years must one man have before he can hear people cry. The answer, my friend is blowing in the wind. The answer is blowing in the wind." You know, when that song first came out, people asked him about the meaning of the song. And this was what Bob Dylan said. There ain't too much I can say about this song except that the answer is blowing in the wind it ain't in no book or movie or TV show or discussion group, man it's in the wind and it's blowing in the wind.

We have many questions. We don't have answers, but the wind blows where it chooses. And the answer is blowing in the wind, and that wind is God, ruah. God chooses where it blows. What you need to do is to surrender your life to God and let God lead you that is life, born of the spirit, a revolutionary message. Life born of the spirit is like life in the wind, not a structured life like a modern corporate life. Life in the wind and the wind will blow where it chooses, and you follow and fly with the wind. I hope that you become free to be able to fly with the wind. Have courage, you'll be all right.

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 got to 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 going to 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 going to 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 experience 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.

Let Each Moment Come Alive

October 15, 2017

2 Peter 3:8-14

Life Flies, Literally

St. Peter said; with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like one day. He was saying that there's no difference between one day and thousand years to God. To us, one day and thousand years are different. To God, there is not that kind of concept of time.

I'd like to explore its meaning with you today. What implication does it have to us believers? In what way is one day like a thousand years, and thousand years like one day? To, us one day is a very short time and a thousand years is a very long time. When I was young, I used to see a lot of day-flies and I played with them – somehow, I don't see them much – but when I was young I saw a lot of them. They live only one day, in the morning they're born, and, in the evening, they die. And then I wonder to myself, and when I saw them, what is the meaning of flying so hard when they're going to be gone at the end of the day? I was wondering. I mean, they just fly around but soon, within few hours they'll be gone from the face of the earth.

Then I realized that we are not much different. Compared to the age of the universe, at the most – 100 years – that's like one day. A select little speck. I still remember when I was really young – I didn't even go into elementary school yet at that time – and then one day I was lying down at my house and I saw a shooting star at night. We had a little a yard, and so I saw a shooting star and then, "Oh my goodness, my life is so..." I don't know. I was maybe six or seven. I don't know, they think like that. But I still remember, "Oh Gosh, scary. My life is going to be like that. It's just a little spark and gone." Now I look back, nearing 60 soon in January, and as I look back, my life went by just like that too. What have I done? What did I do? I was very busy, but it passed by so fast. Sometimes I talk with people in their eighties and they tell me, "Reverend, I don't know how my life just passed by. Gone."

Maybe life is like that. Moses confessed in his prayer, listen to his prayer, “The days of our life are 70 years or perhaps 80. If we are strong, even then their span is only toil and trouble. They are soon gone, and we fly away.” The last sentence really caught my attention. We fly away. Life is like that. We fly away. Some somebody told me, when you’re 50, you’re driving 50 miles per hour. When you’re 60, you’re drive 60 miles per hour. When you’re 90, you are driving 90 miles an hour. Life goes by so fast. Every year goes by so fast. So, we fly away, that makes a lot of sense. And in the same prayer, Moses said this, “For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is passed. Or like a watch in the night, you sweep them away. They’re like a dream. Like grass that is renewed in the morning. In the morning it flourishes, and it is renewed, in the evening it fades and withers.” It’s like day-flies. You’re born in the morning and then die in the evening. And Moses and Peter said, “One day is like thousand years and a thousand years like one day.” What did they mean? The first thing that came to my mind was that time flies.

Here and Now

But there’s another thing that they wanted to say. That is; what is important about time? It’s not its length. One day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. What is important about time is not about his length, but what is contained in it. That’s what’s important. Time is not just about the length. Time is about what’s in it. And I realized how people misunderstand salvation or eternal life. They think that salvation is lengthening their time to eternity. That’s salvation to them, they just want to prolong, they just want to extend their life to eternity. That’s what salvation is to them. The desire to lengthen your time to eternity, to me that is attachment, not salvation. It is just life attachment, attachment to life. That is not salvation.

That only gives me fear. People just use the word salvation as they like, when they actually talk about attachment. We human beings are good at doing that. We just put different words that thinking that reality changes. Reality doesn’t change just because you changed the word. Attachment is attachment. Salvation is salvation. Some people call their narrow-minded stubbornness as conviction. That’s not conviction. That’s a narrow-minded stubbornness. We have a way of using words to make it good and acceptable, or to disguise our unpleasant self. To me, real salvation is not attachment to life and be obsessed with it. To me, attachment is simply

bondage. Because we have attachment, we are afraid of death. When St. Paul rhetorically asked a question to the personalized death, “Oh, death. Where is your victory? Where is your sting?” I see that Paul overcame the attachment to life. He never thought that salvation was an extension of your present life to eternity. His desire was not to lengthen his life, but rather he said he wanted to be with God. Attachment cannot be salvation. Salvation is overcoming your attachment. That’s what salvation is.

When you overcome your attachment to life, what happens? Your moment comes alive and you can see that there is no difference between one day and a thousand years. When your moment comes alive, there is no difference between one day and a thousand years. That’s what it’s like, the moment coming alive – what you have is only the moment. The past is in your memory and the future is in your imagination. The moment is the reality. You have only your moment, but you don’t need to lengthen your moment because the moment is full. You just acknowledge that it is a gift of God and you don’t need to be sad that it will pass by. Salvation is a new realization of your moment. What is contained in that moment is more important, than the quantity of time. What you’re experiencing now and feeling now is more important than how many hours you have left in a day. When the moment comes alive, you don’t need to worry about tomorrow. Jesus said, “So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of his own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”

People who want to extend their lives, worry about tomorrow because tomorrow is essential to extend your life. For those who find salvation today, don’t worry about tomorrow. They don’t waste today while worrying about tomorrow. They live each moment fully. In that sense, the moment is not a temporal language. What is important about the moment is not how short it is, but how full of life it is. These moments come together and make your life, and when your moments alive your life is alive.

Salvation is the Moment

Salvation did not happen yesterday. Salvation will not happen tomorrow. Salvation is now. Now is the time for salvation. Salvation is God’s blessings on our moments. Unfortunately, many people’s moments are completely empty. It is just a short passing moment. As you encounter God in a meaningful way, the concept of time will stop – not the time, the concept of time will stop – and you will enjoy the peace and joy that filled your

moment, and that moment becomes eternity. That's what eternity is all about. When your moments come alive, your past will come alive and your future will come alive. Many people live with regrets about their past and worries and anxieties about the future. But when your today comes alive, everything comes alive. Regrets will be gone. The worries will be gone. The past will come as a meaningful lesson and the future will come as a beautiful hope. The past comes alive and future comes alive when you experienced salvation today.

Salvation is not about someday in the future. It's about now. Pay attention to now and see what God is doing in your life. My friends, I don't feel sad getting old. Not at all. I believe that you're getting renewed as you age, not getting old. Is it escapism? Maybe, but that's how I feel.

Young people don't waste your time mindlessly. Don't waste your time mindlessly. Live the moment fully, awake, and enjoy your every moment doing what is the most meaningful to you. Life is not about how long you live. Life is about how well you live. St. Paul enjoyed his life even in prison because he was alive from within. Being alive does not depend on time and space. Being alive is was within you. When you meet God, you come alive. You just simply enjoy every moment. Older people, like Steve, don't be sad. Just because last Friday you said, "I'm getting old, you know, everything just deteriorates." Don't be sad because you're getting old and everything deteriorates. Cultivate the wisdom. Know what is essential and what is not. Throwaway your attachment but entrust your life in God's hands. In that sense, a day is like a thousand years, a thousand years is like a day. That was my reflection this week.

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 end 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.

Temptation and the Spirit

February 18, 2018

Mark 1:9-15

Worship

It is not for me. You don't come to worship to get anything out of it. We don't do that, worship is only for God and God only. We come here to worship God and to lift up his name. Of course, ultimately, we get benefit out of it, but we don't come here to get something out of it. We purely come to give worship to God. Give everything to God. So, as you come to worship, let us come with that heart, with a prepared heart, that we gave our self as a living sacrifice to God. Today is the first Sunday of Lent. Last Wednesday was Ash Wednesday, starting from Ash Wednesday for 40 days it's called a lent. We're reflecting on Jesus' suffering and sacrifice for us, during this Lent.

The first thing that Jesus experienced during lent was the temptation. So, I'm going to reflect on the reality of temptation with you today. Well, I read this passage, I was always curious as to why did the spirit drive Jesus into the wilderness? Why did the spirit do that? Because wilderness is not a good place. It is a place where there's temptation, it is a dark place. You're vulnerable in the wilderness and the wilderness, not a place that you want to be, and you want to get out of it as soon as possible. But why did the Spirit a send or drive Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted? The Greek word drive here is a very intense word. Almost violent. It is called Ekballo. It means chase out it, drive out. Chase out into the wilderness. The spirit chased Jesus out into the wilderness. When Jesus healed the demon-possessed person, Jesus chased out, like Ekballo that kind of intense, violent of a word. With that, the same with the same intensity the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness on baptism.

The Spirit

The spirit came down like a dove. Very gentle image. Spirit came down like a dove on Jesus at baptism, but all of a sudden, the Spirit change and drove Jesus out into the wilderness. Did the Spirit tempt Jesus? We all know very well that God does not tempt us. God does not tempt you in any

way. God does not make you fall in any way. That is not the God we believe in. Our God never tempts us. This is what James said, “no one when tempted should say, I am being tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one.” Then if God does not tempt us, why did the Spirit drive Jesus into the wilderness. And I was thinking about the reality of temptation. I was thinking whether we can escape or avoid temptation in any way. Can you avoid temptation? Can you live without temptation? No. No matter what we do, we are bound to face temptation in your life. No matter what you do, you will experience temptation. And it’s sometimes very hard, sometimes easier, but we all face temptation. When you’re face temptation, I hope that you don’t give up. You don’t give in.

After baptism, Jesus was about to start gospel work, but right outside of the door, the temptation was waiting for Jesus. Whenever you try to do something good, the temptation is always right there to disturb you. Let’s say, okay, this year I’m going to be a better Christian, and at that moment there is a temptation that makes you go astray. That that is our life. The temptation is real. We all faced temptation. Now I understand why the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness. If the temptation is something that you cannot avoid, then you must face it. That’s why Jesus, a Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness. To face it face to face. Jesus had to confront temptation face to face. That’s what you got to do. If temptation is a reality that you can never escape or avoid then you must confront temptation. Face to face. Don’t beat around the bush. Don’t try to run away from temptation, but confronted face to face. We must see what pulls us down, what presses us down, and we have to confront what blinds our eyes so that we not see. What is that temptation that really pushes you down? That stops you from becoming what you’re supposed to be. What is their power? What is that real reality that does that to you? Not to live as a precious child of God? Once confronted, you’ll see the reality of temptation as naked as possible. You’ll be able to start seeing that. When Jesus was driven into the wilderness and confronted temptation, he was able to see what temptation looked like, what real temptation was like.

Temptation

Mark doesn’t record that, but Matthew and Luke record that. The order is different between Matthew and Luke, but those three things, Jesus was able to see very clearly. The first one was considered the bread more

important than God's word. In other words, survival. Survival is the most important thing. Probably this is the most difficult thing. Difficult temptation to, uh, overcome survival. We feel with our skin and when our survival is at risk, then we get easily tempted. So, survival is the most important thing. The bread is more important than anything else. Two, I'll give you the whole world. It is a temptation of greed. Many people fall into this temptation. Greed, we want to be great. We only have more. All the time greed is around us. Instead of having a pure desire, we always have this greed for fame and reputation and for material possession all these things. And third, will God really helped me when I come down from the pinnacle of the temple? In Matthew that comes at the end, but in Luke, it comes in the in the middle. Will God help me is a temptation of doubt. When you go through a dark time, a difficult time, you wonder will God help me? Even though God has helped you all this time when you face a new problem, you ask that question again will God be able to help me?

When Jesus confronts the reality of temptation face to face, these things were visible. He was able to see what was bothering him. But this reality temptation is not just for Jesus but also for all of us. I realized that the Spirit is not always gentle and good. Spirit does not always take you to a good or comfortable place. Spirit is not always like a dove. Whenever we talk with Spirit we draw doves. The Spirit is not always like that. Sometimes Spirit takes you into the dark reality of temptation. You don't like it, but that's real. That's what Spirit does. The Spirit that we created, we manufactured, always takes you good in a good place. But real Spirit does not take you to a good place. Sometimes the spirit leads us into deep loneliness, sometimes in into self-doubt, sometimes into the cloud of unknowing and sometimes into thinking that everything is in vain. Temptation cries out life after death. Ridiculous. There is no life after death. Death is the end. The temptation will say that.

In KSM last Wednesday, I was kind of emotional because when I looked around, I saw some older members. I've been with them for a long time. They were session members and I looked at them, they were on the verge of death and then they will face the greatest temptation at their deathbed. And then I said to myself, I need to prepare them. I need to prepare them with faith so that they can face their own death, like confidence and faith. Then I got emotional when I thought about them. The temptation will cry out. There's no life after death. Death is the end. And sometimes

temptation cries out no matter how hard you try, that's no use. You won't be able to make. It doesn't matter how hard you try, you won't be able to make it. And sometimes things don't work out well. Difficult things happen repeatedly even in our church.

Nothing Comes Easy

This year theme is Healing through Worship and we put the worship as the center. Less in ESM, but in KSM, a lot of hindrances. Some people got into conflict. I don't know why they do that and all kinds of things were happening things after one after another so that we don't have meaningful worship. Sometimes instead of facing the reality of temptation, they completely ignore it. Don't think about it. If I don't think about it, I don't fall into temptation, so they don't think about. They avoid it. They run away from temptation. Sometimes people drink to forget about temptation. Some people just work and work and work to think about anything else. Just work hard and your life will be okay. They're just scared of temptation, so they try to run away from it. And the result is numbness. You don't even know what you feel. Total numbness, but the Spirit drives us into the wilderness because we doubt going through the wilderness we can never enter the promised land. But without the wilderness, you cannot live a meaningful life you're supposed to live.

Right now, the Winter Olympic is going on and the figure skater couple Duhamel and Radford won the bronze medal. At the last Olympics they came in seventh place and they said in an interview, "during this practice, in the middle of it, they said to each other, we're done. Our Olympic career is done. We can never make it." But there was a temptation and they overcame it. They practice and practice. Suddenly, things got together, and they started believing in themselves. Had more confidence. And then finally at the Olympic, they got the bronze medal. I think life is like that. No matter what you do, nothing comes easy though.

No one lives an easy life. To live a good and meaningful life we must go through the wilderness of temptation. As you go through the wilderness of temptation, there's one thing that you must do that is trusting God. It is very concrete advice. When you go through temptation, trust in God. You must learn to trust in God. The wilderness of temptation is the best place to learn how to trust in God. Saint Paul taught us about temptation. This is what it said. No testing has overtaken you. That is not common to everyone. God

is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing, he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it. If you're just running away from temptation, you will never learn to trust in God. In times of trials and temptation, you must learn to trust in God.

Reflection

Running away from temptation is a cowardice. Lack of courage brings only regrets. Are you going to live a life with regrets, or are you going to overcome your temptation and live it fully? I want all of you to live a meaningful life, whatever you do. And to do that, you must persevere through temptation. Let us not be scared of temptation. Why be scared? Because God promised that you'll never be tempted beyond your ability. And God will give you the strength and God will show you a way out when you go through temptation. So, when temptation comes to you, learn to trust in God. God will give you strength and God will show you the way out.

Boldly move forward with your life. Obstacles are there for you to go over. Obstacles are not there for you to avoid. They are there for you to go over. You'll become stronger. Don't be frightened with small waves. You'll be able to handle even the big waves. Be a bigger person. Be a bigger person. The only way to do it is to fight against temptation, to overcome your temptation with God's strength. Let us sing together.

God Who Searches the Heart

May 20, 2018

Romans 8:26-28

Prayer

Sometimes we don't know exactly what we want in our lives and actually, it is the hardest thing to really know what we want in our lives. Our deepest desire is often hidden deep within us, so it is hard to articulate. It is hard to be aware of what I really want in my life. We thought we wanted this and we really worked hard for it and we even prayed about it, but when we actually get there, we realize that that's not really what I wanted. That's not really what I want. I mean, before we want that so much and then we prayed for it and the strong desire to have it and when once you have it you realize that that's not really what you wanted, so it just really hard to know what I want in my life. When I talk to a lot of young people. So, what do you want in your life? I'm not sure. I'm not really. I don't know what I want so we can identify with Saint Paul what Saint Paul said in today's scripture passage for we do not know how to pray as we ought. This is Saint Paul talking about we don't know what we ought to pray for. What is prayer? Prayer is pouring out your deepest desire to God. That's what prayer is, isn't it? And when you don't know your deepest desire, even prayer becomes very difficult. We don't even know what we pray for.

In that sense, I realized and knowing the will of God is the most difficult thing to do, we talk about the will of God all the time, but really knowing the will of God for me, for us is the most difficult thing to do. I mean, I believe that the will of God is what's best for you, isn't it? God doesn't want you to suffer the will of God is God's desire to be, to give you the best. That's what will of God is, but it is really hard to know what the will of God is. If you know the will of God, that can be the best thing that can ever happen to your life. If you really know the will of God for you because God's will for you is perfect and flawless. If you understand the will of God for you, you will be the happiest person in the world. God wants the best for you and God wants to give you what's just right for you. Once Jesus said this about prayer, is there anyone among you who if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for fish, will give a snake? If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children? How much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him.

Will of God

God will give good things to those who ask him. Same passage, but it is expressed differently in Luke Gospel, so they talk about the same thing, but you know a little bit of a different tone and as a. When you look at Luke, this is how Luke described that. Is there anyone among you who if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of fish? What if the child asks for an egg will give him a scorpion? If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the holy spirit to those who ask him? One Matthew says, what is good for you? Good things that God gives. And then Luke says, God gives the Holy Spirit to you.

God's will for you is to give what is the best for you. And yet it is so difficult to know what God's will for me is. Hey, what's difficult? Even for Saint Paul, it was difficult for him to know the will of God too. St Paul gives us this wonderful news. It is a spiritual wisdom he discovered. Matthew said, God will give what is good to those who ask him, but Luke said God would give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. In these two passages, we get a clue what is good for us and the Holy Spirit and what is good for us, his Holy Spirit. In other words, what is good for us God will reveal to us through the Holy Spirit. We don't know exactly what we want, what is best for us, but through the Holy Spirit, we understand what is best for us. Even Saint Paul did not know what God's will for him is, but through the Holy Spirit, only through the Holy Spirit, he was able to see what was best for him, what the will of God for him was.

This is what Saint Paul says. Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the very spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words and God who searches the heart, knows what the mind of the spirit is because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God, according to the will of God. We don't know what the will of God is, but the Holy Spirit will intercede for you according to the will of God. The spirit knows what the will of God for us is. I said that our true desires deeply are hidden within us and sometimes we don't know. We are not conscious of it, but the Holy Spirit searches through the heart and knows what we truly desire and intercedes for us according to the will of God. Interceding means speaking to God on behalf of us for our favour. The spirit searches our desire and let us know and let God know.

You are Not Alone

Today's the Pentecost, on Pentecost we Christians believe that celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. You are not alone. You have the spirit with you. You're not an orphan. Jesus Christ gave us the spirit after he left the earth and that spirit, guides you, leads you, always empowers you, encourages you. You all have the spirit within you. This is what Jesus said and I'll ask the father, and he will give you another helper. That's a spirit to be with you forever. Even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and we'll be in you. The spirit dwells with you and his spirit is in you.

We don't have to figure out everything about life on our own. The spirit helps us and guides us according to the will of God. You cannot figure out everything on your own because life is too big to figure out on your own, so every day, be mindful of the spirit within you, be in touch with the spirit who dwells within you, and then you will come to understand what you truly desire. Otherwise, you will just follow what other people do. You will just live a life that is given to you. You will pursue what other people pursue other people pursue. You will think that that's the best life. Sometimes we live our life, not our own life. We live the life that other people want us to live. You can't do that. You have to live your own life, not other what other people want from you, but to really know what I want in life, we have to be in. We have to be in touch with our deepest desire and then we cannot really get there by ourselves, but the spirit guides us and leads us and the searches our heart and lets us know what is deeply in that heart, in your heart and what you truly do desire for your life. That's what spirit does for us. The spirit knows how much you suffer, and then Paul says, Spirit suffers more than you. He says with a size too deep for words he prays for you. The Spirit prays for you and the Spirit intercedes for you with sighs, too deep for words. So, every moment I try to be in touch with the spirit, sometimes I just get influenced by my emotion and all that, but I tried to go back to the spirit that is within me and being touched with that spirit and that spirit, I believe that will guide me and guide you.

You know what the result is? The result is this. We know that all things work together for good, for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. This is not an empty promise. This is not just positive thinking or wishful thinking. The spirit knows what is best for you and it

works within you and guides you according to God's will for you. When we walk in the spirit, we can have confidence. When you're in doubt, sit down and be in touch with the spirit. You will know where to go. When you're sad and angry, sit down and be in touch with the spirit. The spirit will calm you and spiritual will touch you with its gentle hands.

Reflection

When you make decisions, don't make just decisions by your emotion, sit down and be in touch with the spirit and sees how the spirit guides you and leads you. The spirit will open the door for you and you follow that. That's the best thing that you can ever do. You may not know God's will for you, but spirit knows God's will for you. When the spirit is with us, not only we have confidence, we have joy, we will be filled with joy. Out of our belly, rivers of living water will follow day by day. I hope that all of us be in touch with the spirit. We are spiritual beings, we are not just material beings, we are spiritual beings. Spirit is with us, so trust in the guidance of the spirit day by day, and you will see how your life unravels itself. Sometimes you wonder when you're so filled with emotion, you wonder where my life is going, but when you're in touch with his spirit, you can see the guidance and direction. The Holy Spirit gives you. That's the greatest gifts. That God, Jesus left with us. The spirit is with us and searches your heart. Let us sing together.

Free to be Lead

May 27, 2018

John 3:1-17

Freedom

Nicodemus was a learned man. He knew a lot about religion, politics, and life, and he was elite. He was cream of the crop. He was a man of elite status and yet he did not know the Holy Spirit. Knowing the Holy Spirit is like knowing the wind. Jesus said, "We cannot really know the wind. We hear the sound of the wind, but we don't know where it comes from or where it's going to go." The spirit is elusive, uncontrollable, unpredictable and unknowable. We don't understand exactly how the wind works and we don't know exactly how the spirit works.

You know whenever I read this passage, I feel freedom. Total freedom. A freedom that comes from a strange sense of empowerment. The life that I tried to control is hard. Very hard and the matter of the fact is that there are not many things in life that you can really control. We can prepare for the future, but the outcome of the future we cannot control. Other people, we cannot control. How they treat us, and how they view us, we cannot control. People hated Jesus and gathered together to plan to kill him and ultimately, they crucified Jesus on the cross and yet Jesus did nothing to control them. Because he knew that he could not control them. He could not control how they behaved or sinned. Judas betrayed him. Peter denied him. But Jesus simply accepted them, and he did not try to control their behaviours.

Control

There are many things in life as a matter of life that we cannot control. But people love to control. People, they want power because they want to control. They want to control other people, they want to control the situation, they want to control their life. They love to control that's why they are seeking power. They're continuously thirsty for power. You need power to be in a position of control. Power of knowledge, financial power, political power. The power over other people. We need powers to be able to control our life, our situation, and other people. You can say that Nicodemus had all these powers as a matter of fact. He was in a position of control but seeing Jesus, Nicodemus had this realization that life itself is not just about

control. Seeing Jesus, he realized that life is bigger than the life of taking control. That's why he came to Jesus at night. He was very interested in that different alternative life. What it looked like. What it was like. That's why he came to Jesus at night. He had never seen that before. He was so used to the life he could control. But he has never seen the life that Jesus.

In the world, there are many people who have no power to control whatsoever in their lives. They don't even have the power to even control what rightly belongs to them. Like their land, their children, their family, their culture, their history. They do not have control even over things that rightly belong to them. Many of your parents, many of your grandparents experienced that. In their lives, directly by Japanese occupation.

Aboriginal people in this country are in that situation. Palestinians in the Gaza area are in that situation, we will hear more of that today from Amy. They didn't have the kind of power, they don't have that kind of power that Nicodemus had. Jesus told Nicodemus, you have to start again, you have to start your life all over again from the beginning. You have to be born again. Jesus taught us that the life of being born again is not the life you control with your own power. The life of being born again is a life that is being led by the Holy Spirit. There is a huge difference between the life you control and the life that is being led by the Holy Spirit. When I look at Jesus life, Jesus was totally controlled by the Spirit and by the time, he often said: "my time has not yet come." Jesus life was not a life of controlling but a life of being led. He lived a life that was led by the truth, he lived a life that was led by justice, he lived a life that was led by love. There is a radical difference between life controlling and life being led. In their attempt to control their lives, they try to manipulate others and even conquer them. Being led by the Spirit, you don't need to manipulate others, you don't need to have power over them, you would rather share that power you have, and you will rather empower others who don't have it.

Tower of Babel was a typical example of people who tried to control their destiny. That was the ultimate mistake that human beings made, recorded in the Bible. Let us read what they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens and let us make a name for ourselves otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole Earth."

Is it a life of being lead? Or a life of controlling? God called Abraham as an example of the future generation where being led by God. Not the people who control their destiny and others. Abraham was the example of how we human beings should live. Faith is not to dictate our life using religious power and political power but to truly follow the guidelines of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will lead us into the truth, the Spirit will lead us to justice, the Spirit will lead us into love. The cross was a symbol of not controlling but a symbol of being led. Jesus prayed like this in Gethsemane and going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me and not what I want but what you want." Is it a life a controlling? or a life of being led?

Being Led

We can see clearly that Jesus was led by God, he did not dictate his own life, being called means now we are ready to be led by the Spirit. Every moment we need to be led by the Spirit. In this world, people try to control others, whether in the family or even in the friendship, they try to control others. One nation tries to control other nations, for their own benefits, they try to control the situation, control other people and control nations. They try to maneuver the situation with all the power they can have, to fulfill their will, they will have no problem sacrificing other people even killing them. They do not uphold others lives, their human rights. They try to solve all their problems by the power that they have. With that attitude, we cannot see the kingdom of God or enter it. The life that you try to control ultimately brings destruction and death, but the life that is led by the Spirit will lead us into eternal life. Jesus came to give us life whoever believes in him will be led by it into eternal life. People who are led by the Spirit will create a new world, a new history. The new world of God will not be established by the people who have the power to control, God will call the people who are willing to be led by the Spirit and God will create a new world, a new history, a new Order.

God will bring about God's justice, the good people who are called and who are led by the Spirit. People who are led by the Spirit will no longer be governed by fear, they don't fear anymore, they will just follow in the way they are led by the Spirit. They will listen to the voice of the Spirit, they don't know where the Spirit comes from or where the Spirit is going to, but they will obey the voice, the voice of the Spirit. Let us always pray. Let us listen to the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ, we will need to hear him. We

will hear after service from Amy, I hope that we all be able to hear the voice of the Spirit. What God wants to do in this world. Jeremiah said this, "Call to me and I will answer you and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known." God will show us great and hidden things. Let us hear attentively the voice of the Spirit.