

St. Timothy Presbyterian Church



TRANSFORMATION

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2014 - 2018
Sermons

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DESENSITIZED GENERATION

July 6, 2014

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

What a Wonderful World

One of my favourite songs is What a Wonderful World. We even sang it once in our worship service. It is just beautiful. In that song you see the beauty, not only beauty of nature, but the beauty of life. Whenever I hear that song or sing that song . I feel that life is beautiful. So let us look at the words there. I see trees of green, red roses too. I see them bloom for me and you and I think to myself, what a wonderful world. I see skies of blue and clouds of white, the bright blessed day, the dark sacred night. And I think to myself what a wonderful world. The colours of the rainbow so pretty in the sky are also on the faces of people going by. I see friends shaking hands saying, how do you do? They are really saying, I love you. I hear babies cry. I watch them grow. They will learn much more than I'll ever know. And I think to myself, what a wonderful world. That's how the song is. Nice song, nice image. But unfortunately the world we live in, it's not this nice. Sometimes it is cold and cruel. People are not always nice, people are not always kind. Sometimes they're rude. I don't see friends always shaking hands. I see friends shaking their fists.

I don't see just blue skies and white clouds. I see storm and scary dark clouds. I don't see innocent kids being taken good care of and we enjoy seeing them grow, but I see kids being kidnapped. As we see this world. Can we always say what a wonderful world? Not really, some people say may say what an awful world. We experienced the rejection, betrayal, racism, sexism, bullying, and big disappointment with people and these experiences make our hearts hardened. We don't easily trust people anymore. We close our hearts to people. Since we don't like the feeling of pain, we shut down all our feelings and we become numb and desensitized. Not only the feeling of pain is gone, but all feelings are gone. We cannot even feel for life. Listen to what Jesus said about this generation. He said, "We play the flute for you and you did not dance. We wailed and you did not mourn" How accurate his description is about the condition of our heart. We don't know how to dance. We don't know how to cry. We are all locked up inside. We may be too busy to feel. We may be

so stressed that we don't want to feel. After this hard work, you come home and you just want to shut down. You don't want to think. You don't want to feel. If this keeps going, slowly our hearts will shut down.

We use all our energy to make a living and there is no energy left to take care of our souls, to take care of ourselves, and slowly we become hardened and hardened. You know, to live in this world, there is no problem to function as an emotionally deprived person. You can function still very well. You can work very well, but your emotion gets dried up and your soul gets so dry.

I want to feel for what other people may go through. When we watch news. We hear everyday so many people die here and so many people die there. The kid is kidnapped with his grandparents. We always hear these news about terrible things going on in the world and after awhile you get numb, you get desensitized. They just become numbers. So many die. 20, 30, 100, whatever. They just become numbers. We don't feel for what they may go through. It is pretty hard to feel anything about other people. We just don't know how other people may feel. We are losing the ability to feel. Our ability to make money and work efficiently gets better and better, but our ability to feel becomes worse and worse.

Rejoice with Those who Rejoice

Saint Paul said in Romans Chapter Twelve, verse 15, this is what he said, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." In other words, dance, when the food is played, cry, when the sorrow is shared. But Jesus saw that we are not able to do that. We have lost the ability to feel for other people feel. When you don't feel for other people, how can you rejoice with them when they rejoice? How can you weep with those who weep? The degree of our intellectual level from our brain may be very high. You're very smart people, but the degree of our emotional level may become lower and lower. But I do believe the real intelligence is not in the brain. I do believe that the real intelligence is to know how others feel exactly. Jesus was like that. Jesus wept, Jesus got angry, but he knew exactly how to feel for the situation. I think that is really intelligence. I think that they are the real smart ones, not the people who are smart in the brain. People who know how to feel, what other people feel. Feeling my friends, it's not just feeling, feeling needs to be trained, otherwise we wouldn't even

know how to feel and our feelings can be very inappropriate. When you should not be angry, you get angry. When you're supposed to be very happy, you don't feel any joy.

I remember myself going through that. I was the person who officiated the wedding and there's a beautiful couple in front of me and there were hundreds of people with beautiful clothes and then they shared laughter and joy. The person who was officiating the wedding, I felt nothing. I felt nothing. People's laughter that bothered me rather. When we don't know how to feel, that feeling needs to be trained. When we lose our ability to feel it is the worst feeling. It is much better to feel painful than feeling nothing. When you feel nothing it really drives you crazy. When you're in pain, when you feel pain, you know what is going on, but when you don't feel anything, it is a really hard to bear. To feel nothing is to feel no pulse of life and that is death.

Jesus Will Free you of Your Burdens

A few years ago, a middle aged man came to me and said "Reverend, I feel numb. I don't feel anything. I don't know what I like and I don't know what I wanna do. I don't even know what gives me joy and what satisfies me. I feel nothing. What should I do?" He asked. When you're not capable of feeling, you cannot truly appreciate the beauty of life. You become victims of hardened heartedness. You become a very harsh person. Jesus pointed this out in verse 18 and 19 "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he was a demon. The son of man came eating and drinking and they say, look, a glutton and a drunkard. A friend of tax collectors and sinners." All they did was judgment. They cannot feel for anything. They could have no empathy for others, no connectedness with others here at the heart level. They just judge everything from their brain, but they cannot connect with people at this heart level.

Modern people suffer from this heart and heart. Nothing good can come about, only judgment, criticism, cynicism and negative worldview. People have been too stress out, people have been too busy, they have been too hurt. They have experienced too many failures and defeat. So if you keep going that way slowly, slowly, you're running towards death, emotional death. My friends, we have good news. This is what Jesus said. "Come to me all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give

you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you'll find the rest. You'll find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Jesus can give us the true rest. The modern people have too much in their soul.

Transform your Pain into Compassion, Suffering and Love

Their burdens are too heavy. Their soul is oppressed and depressed. They need the rest. We all need rest. Not just physical rest, but spiritual rest. Spiritual rest. That's what we need. Jesus said to come to him. All those who are weary and are carrying heavy burden. He said, he'll give you the rest. He will give you rest. Once you find true rest in Christ, you'll find you will restore true feelings. Then you can really connect with people at the emotional level, at a real level. You can feel for what other people feel. Being spiritual, it's nothing complicated. Being spiritual is being alive. All your sense, all your senses come alive. That's what it means to be spiritual. When you're spiritual, you can feel it because everything is alive and everything so sensitive. You can feel people's joy. You can feel everything, even the pain. When you're spiritual, you can feel the pain much more clearly. That's why you can feel the pain for the pain of other people. When other people are going through suffering, you feel the pain, but the pain does not remain as pain, but the pain is transformed into compassion, suffering, love.

So we need to restore that spiritual senses. Our senses need to come alive so that we may be connected with each other and we may be connected with God. Come to Jesus and find true rest. Don't just run and run and run. Once in a while, stop and think about it. Do you feel what you feel. Many people don't even know what they feel inside. So many things going on. They don't even know what's going on in their hearts. Do you feel what you feel inside? Find true rest in Christ, come to him. He will give you rest and then you'll find true joy of life.

A NEW TEACHING – WITH AUTHORITY!

February 1, 2015

Mark 1:21-28

Jesus Taught

Today's story is a very unique and strange story. Jesus made it to the synagogue sanctuary. There was a man with an unclean spirit. Jesus drove that unclean spirit out of him. I'm not quite sure what Mark meant by the unclean spirit, because we don't use that term in modern days. We don't use that anymore. I don't know whether there is a psychiatric labelling for that or it's just a spiritually unclean spirit. Just generally they refer to this kind of situation, as unclean spirits, so it's not quite clear what that meant, he was going through. But even before he actually drove out the unclean spirit, the first thing Jesus did it. This was the first Ministry of Jesus Christ. As soon as he began the ministry, what he did was he went into the synagogue and taught. I think teaching is a very, a central core of Jesus' ministry.

So the first thing Jesus did was teaching and then people were astounded. That is what people said when they heard Jesus teach. They were astounded at his teaching for he taught them as one entity of authority and not as, the scribes. I meditated on that as one having the authority and not as the scribes. What does that mean? Teaching as a person who has the authority and not as scribes. When you read the Bible, we often labelled Jesus as the word of God. For example, Gospel John, which was the most developed theological book. John said, "Jesus is the word of God and that word of God became flesh. And that is Jesus Christ". So Jesus and the word of God are very intimately connected with each other. After Jesus' teaching they there were astounding that Jesus drove out the unclean spirit part of this man. I was thinking about what was the condition of that man with the unclean spirit. Was he lonely? Yes. Isolated? Probably. He was completely isolated from others. Experiencing the void of life. The emptiness. Maybe surrounded by the absurdity of life. Out of focus. Estrangement from reality. An endless struggle.

I think this is what this man with an unclean spirit experienced when he met Christ. But when you look at all these, as a matter of fact, these are what

modern people often complain about. This is what modern people experience. So, I realized that this story is not about one individual. It's not an isolated instance about one individual. I think this is about human beings as a whole and both ancient and modern. That is a predicament that we human beings experience. When Jesus' word came to him. Something wonderful happened to this man. Mark said, "And the unclean spirit throwing it into convulsions and it cried with a loud voice, and came out of him". The unclean spirit came out of him. He was released from the power that controlled him, oppressed it and took the life out of him. You know, teaching, when you receive teaching what do you do? You accumulate knowledge and it becomes a power. You get educated, you learn about accounting and all that and you get so much experience and knowledge that you can really become powerful or a doctor or an engineer whatever. With that knowledge or teaching, you accumulate certain knowledge and you have power.

Taught so We can be Free

But in what ways was Jesus teaching different from the teachings that we know or teachings of scribes? I think Jesus teaching was not to accumulate. I think Jesus' teaching was to drive out what we don't need. That's the difference between Jesus teaching and the teaching of scribes. The scribes gather the knowledge about God, about the law, about everything, and maybe "Kevin (Made up name)", I'm an expert on the law", but Jesus teaching was not to accumulate these things, but drive out things that bind us, or enslave us. One is about taking out and the other is about adding on. Very different things being taught. Most of the teaching that you receive is adding on, but Jesus' teaching was to let go. Let go of the things that enslave us and bind us. That's Jesus' teaching. Jesus did not come to add more to this world. Jesus' teaching was not about adding more information about God. They said that Jesus' teaching was a new type of teaching, but Jesus never taught anything new. All he taught was already in the Old Testament. Love God. Love your neighbour. That's all in the Old Testament. So Jesus never taught new teaching or new information that way. Jesus Christ came to this world. Not to add more, but to drive out what bound the world.

Real teaching is not about adding more knowledge and more power because you already have lots of people who have knowledge, that is not teaching. Real teaching is about freeing us from things that enslave us.

When you receive real teaching, then you have the empowerment to let go of the things that is leaving. Certain desire that you have, you can let go. So if you have a lot of greed and pride, when you received the right teaching, you can let go of those, especially religious pride. Jesus taught the Pharisees, said that they could never let go of their pride because they were so religiously absorbed into their own self-interest. But when the right teaching of Jesus Christ happens within us, then we have the power to drive out the darkness within us. People accumulating knowledge and they're very proud of how much they know. And yet nothing much changes in them. Maybe we know much more than what we used to. With help of the Internet, you could ask me anything. I can give you the information about how to use your phone or how to take pictures or any question you ask me? I will probably be able to answer your question. By the end of this service. A few strokes, you get the information. And yet, we human beings feel more isolated, more lonely, feel more abandoned. The emptiness is more severe than before. So the answer is not having more. The answer is to have, the right teaching of Jesus Christ so that we can be free from what enslaves us. From what drives us into darkness.

Reflection

So in your journey, I think the important thing is to remember that whatever teaching you have, don't try to put it in your brain. Meditate on the teaching so that you can be free. You have the power to be free from that enslavement. What is the thing that enslaves you right now? Is it your insecurity? Or is it your lack of confidence, or stubbornness, or hatred, anger and religious pride? What is that enslaves you pray that Jesus' teaching may free you from that enslaving you? When you read Mark, the word schizo comes out quite often. Schizo from the word schizophrenia divided. When Jesus was baptized.

Jesus' teaching us schizo, it divides us from the darkness. It drives out darkness within us. It makes us pure and clean. The word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It penetrates even to a dividing soul and spirit. Jesus sees very well how enslaved we are, and Jesus came to tear apart holds this world and what enslaves this world. As Jesus tore apart the unclean spirit from the men. Jesus came to tear apart the darkness from us. You don't need to live in that darkness anymore. Jesus' teaching can help you, empower you to be free from the darkness, and live your life in the light. And that is the difference between Jesus and

the teachings of scribes or teachings of this world. Nothing in the world can teach us to be free from the darkness. Jesus' teaching can free us from the darkness. May Gods work and the teachings of Jesus Christ truly transform you and help you. And that is the journey that we want to take this year. Trust in Gods word, and see what happens within you.

RESURRECTION IS THE CONCLUSION OF EVERYTHING

April 5, 2015

John 20:1-18

The Concept Of Resurrection

Jesus today is the rising from the dead. The concept of resurrection is kind of familiar to us. Resurrection is Jesus rising from the dead to the early Christians. For example, Mary today, resurrection, even the concept itself was not a familiar concept. It is unimaginable, beyond our imagination. It was a very, very difficult concept to accept. She might have some idea of the possibility of resurrection because her brother Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus. But the thing is, Jesus who raised Lazarus is dead now. Who's going to raise the raising? She cannot even think about the possibility of resurrection. When she saw the empty tomb, she was devastated. She did not even look at the empty tomb. She did not even think about the possibility that Jesus might've been raising. She automatically assumed that somebody took the body away. Somebody took the body away. That's how she thought. The entity was supposed to be good news because Jesus is raising. Jesus is not there anymore. But to Mary it was somebody must have taken the body from the tomb.

Tomb is where death is – the tomb cannot hold Jesus anymore because Jesus was not dead anymore. Jesus is not in the tomb where the dead gathers. When Mary finally met the risen Christ, she met Christ whom she could not find in the tomb. There when she met the risen Christ. She found the ultimate purpose of her life. She realized that all the teaching and all the actions of Jesus were consummated in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's what I believe. Resurrection is the conclusion of everything. Resurrection, it's the finale day of our life. The resurrection is a final goal and object of what we human beings pursue and look for it.

We do a lot of things in life. We tried to find meaning in what we do and sometimes we find good meaning in life and we do meaningful things. For without resurrection, everything becomes temporary and we cannot find the ultimate meaning. That's why St. Paul said "If Christ has not been raised,

your faith is futile.” Your faith is futile. We have hope even in our suffering because at the end of our suffering, we know that there is restoration. Even you hit the rock bottom of your life, you can hit it, kick it and then rise again because you have the power of resurrection that brings you up from the dead. I believe the resurrection is the greatest gift God gave to all human beings, but it is there. It is hidden. We cannot understand it. We cannot know it. It is in different reality because it is in a different reality with our reality. We cannot understand the reality of the resurrection by touching, by feeling, by seeing, by tasting. You cannot understand resurrection because it is a different reality. So with the methodology of our reality, we can never understand the real reality of resurrection.

The Power Of Resurrection

When Jesus died on the cross and afterwards when he was raised, he appeared to the disciples and Thomas wasn't there and Thomas said, “Unless I touched his head and then feel the nail mark and then I touch his side, and then put my hand in there, I will not accept the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Thomas said, in other words, what he's saying is, with this reality, I will understand, I will accept that reality or not. That's what he's saying, basically. With the evidence of this reality, I will understand the power of that reality, a different reality. When Jesus Christ, after one week, appeared to Thomas and then told him feel my head, put your hand on my side. Then the scripture doesn't say that Thomas actually felt the hand or put his hand on the side. The scripture doesn't say that. As soon as Thomas met the risen Christ, he knelt down and then confessed my Lord and my God. Resurrection is not something that I can explain. The resurrection is not something that you can prove, but there is a resurrection and there is a power of resurrection working in us and operating in us, and our ultimate goal in our lives is to meet the power, encounter the power of resurrection and live our lives with that power. Once we believe in the resurrection, that power will control us, will change us... that power will change our present moment. Not only will that power gives us eternal life, that power will change our present life. It will give us the confidence, no matter what we go through we will not be crushed because that power of resurrection is with us.

Everything we do becomes so enjoyable. Even the suffering cannot dampen the spirit of life that is working within us. Jesus believed in resurrection and ultimately he resurrected. When you believe in the

resurrection, ultimately you will also rise from the dead. You will experience the resurrection. I love even the concept of resurrection and I may not be able to prove it to you, but even the idea of the resurrection is so wonderful. For any of you who are here who don't believe in resurrection but still think about the concept and the idea of resurrection, that is so powerful. And they will transform our existence in the most meaningful way, and today we celebrate that resurrection.

JOURNEY OF BEING AWAKENED

April 12, 2015

Luke 24:13-34

My Eyes are Opened

It's wonderful to think of life as a journey because we experience all kinds of things. We smell flowers, we hear singing, we taste food etc. We sometimes experience sadness, joy, celebration, and sometimes desperation and despair. It is really wonderful to think of life as a journey, but this journey is not just about experiencing all of these things. This journey is also the journey of having your eyes opened.

A Beautiful Picture

Today's scripture passage is one of my favorite scripture passages. We can almost see an image of this story. Emmaus was on the West side of Jerusalem so the disciples were walking towards the West in the evening. The disciples were not walking with joyful steps but they were rather walking with a kind of sadness. They walked very slowly because they had been with Jesus for 3 years and he was now no longer there. Prior to being with Jesus, the disciples had never experienced such a profound message from anyone. They also saw all the miracles that Jesus performed and how Jesus fought against the evil system of the time. Jesus was courageous and Jesus really empowered them so that they felt courageous. With all this, the disciples thought that something good was going to happen but instead Jesus just died on the cross. The scripture doesn't say this but Emmaus was most likely the disciples' hometown. The disciples' journey with Jesus was now over, and they were going home. They didn't know what they were going to do, but everything was over. But just as the disciples were walking, Jesus was right there on the road with them however the disciples did not know that at the time.

Life is very, very interesting. Sometimes they are right there but you cannot really see who they are. Jesus was right there, but they could not see him. But then, the disciples' eyes became open and they finally met the risen Christ.

The next day after they had seen Jesus, they kept walking towards the East. At that time, it was probably morning. Originally, they were walking very slowly, but now they were running towards the East to Jerusalem as the sun rose. The entire picture is beautiful. Our life should also be like that. Maybe we all walk with sad and heavy steps, but somehow we meet Christ then turn around and live our lives with an energetic empowerment. Often, we get defeated in life and experience a lot of things that make us devastated. All kinds of different situations that we experience in life can really drive us into despair, but on the road of our journey, if we meet the risen Christ, our life can be changed. We can then turn around and walk victoriously.

Layers of Reality

What you see is not everything. Everybody sees different things. Even though they think that they see the same thing, everybody sees different things. So there are different levels, different layers of reality that we see. With our physical eyes we may see one thing, but with different eyes we may see another thing. We don't just see one thing all the time. So don't think that what everybody else sees is what you see. Depending on what you're going through, depending on what you're experiencing right now, what you see is very different compared to what you will see in the future. Many years later you may look at it and say, "My goodness, what did I see at that time?" We realize that there are different layers of reality and that our journey is about our eyes being open and seeing the risen Christ.

This morning one lady came to see me. She came to me with tears in her eyes and said, "I came alive. I was dead this weekend but now I got life back." In other words, her eyes were opened to another level of reality. After I talked to her, I went to the new members class. We have a new members class on Sunday after service. So we sat down and there was this man who just became a member of our church. He said, "You know, I used to go to church because my wife told me to go to church to play golf with my friends but this weekend I was really thinking about whether I actually believe or not. I don't want to be in the middle. I'm gonna try my best to believe." This man was awakened to another layer of reality. I think this revelation is wonderful. There's no such thing as; "I believe." Belief is always present. Even whether you believe right now or not, or whether you've seen the Risen Christ or not, there's no such thing as "I used to

believe.” In this life, ask yourself, do you believe? Do you believe that Jesus has risen from the dead? Have you met the risen Christ?

When I die, I wonder what will happen. A dominant picture that comes to me is that when I die I will finally be able to see my life. I don't see that clearly right now, but once I die I will say, “Ah, now I understand why all of these things were happening,” and then I think I will have a clear understanding of life, of God, of myself and everybody. Just like Saint Paul said, “Now I see divinity but someday I'll see clearly like I see in the mirror.” He then talks about that in the context of love in 1 Corinthians chapter 13: “So I think that love has the power to open our eyes to be able to see.” When we are self centered, we are blinded. But when we are able to love, our eyes can finally open and see. When you look at the scripture, there are a lot of references about our eyes being blinded and then opened up. Sometimes we live in blindness and we think that we know but we actually don't know. Only after we have our eyes open can we then see. Saint Paul thought that he knew pretty well about the law of God, about himself, and about everything. He thought he knew them pretty well, but once he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, he realized that he didn't see anything and that he didn't know anything. Then something like scales fell off from his eyes and he was finally able to see grace. He was able to see God.

When look at something, ask yourself, which layer are you looking at? Which layer are you seeing? Are you seeing this layer of reality or that layer of reality? Resurrection is at the top. If we try to see resurrection at this level of reality, you'll never be able to see it and you can only have an emotional experience. Even when you praise, you will only see emotional things rather than spiritual things. Life is not just about emotional things, life is also about spiritual things and seeing a different layer of reality.

Peter and The Blind Man

When you read the Gospel Mark, there's a very interesting story side by side. One is Peter's confession and the other is of a blind man being healed. Jesus usually heals a person right away but this time Jesus touched a blind man and did not completely heal him. Then Jesus said, “So, what do you see?” The blind man said, “I see something like trees walking around,” so that meant that he could not see very clearly. And then Jesus touched him again and the blind man was finally able to see.

Alongside this story, there are confessions of Peter. Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" The disciples said, "Some people say you're a prophet." Jesus then asked them, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter said, "You are the son of the Living God in Christ." But immediately after that Jesus said, "I'll have to be persecuted and crucified and die and rise again." And then Peter said, "No, that shouldn't happen." Peter only saw part of Jesus' plan, but he didn't see the whole thing. And then Jesus finally came to Peter and he asked, "Do you love me?" When Peter experienced love, his eyes were open so he was able to see. But at the end, Peter said to the people, "This is tradition, not the scripture. I cannot die like my lord so hang me upside down." So he died on the cross, upside down. Finally he was able to see in his journey. I hope that our eyes may be opened and we really see what we're supposed to see.

Living in the Present

The priest Anthony Demello said something very interesting about life. He said, "Life is like this. You go to a symphony and when the symphony is about to begin, you realize that you locked your keys inside the car. Now, all of a sudden you think, 'Oh my goodness. What am I going to do?' The symphony goes on and it reaches the climax but you hear nothing. All you can think of is, 'Oh my goodness, how stupid am I leaving my keys there. What am I gonna do now? Oh, the towing car will have to come and how much will that cost?'" All throughout the symphony, that is what you think about. You worry and regret about your mistakes and you worry about the future. Sometimes we live like that.

We worry and regret about our past and we worry about the future in the present moment. We don't hear and we don't even see this present moment. This very precious moment is fleeting away. We never live a full life. The present has to come alive. The past is not reality and the future is not yet reality, the past is already gone and the future did not come yet. We live in the present. When you believe in the present moment, it will come alive and you'll be able to live your life more fully every moment, and that's the journey.

Opened Eyes

The people that I mentioned about from the Newcomer service had an awakened realization and it happens all the time. Tonight I'm going to Santiago, it is a place where many Christians have passed by. Some people say that Jesus' mother, Mary, had walked that pilgrimage. I'm very excited to walk that pilgrimage and I'm wondering what God will reveal to me as God had revealed to the two members of that Newcomer service. If God doesn't speak at all, it's fine. I don't necessarily demand that He speak. But God will speak, I know that God will speak on the road. God will speak to me and awaken me and make me think about, "What am I doing? What is my life? How am I going to live my life?"

If you don't meet the risen Christ in your journey, if you don't hear what God is speaking to you at this moment, then you're just wasting your life. I hope that in your journey, your eyes can be made open and you will see.

In Hasidic Judaism, the people believe this: Everyday, a hundred angels visit you and give you a hundred messages everyday. I think that's very wise and very true. I receive at least a hundred messages just when I sit around, when I talk with somebody, or when I experience something. But how many messages do you really hear? You may think, "There were no messages for me today." Do you miss out on all the messages that you receive every day? I hope that our eyes may be open and our ears may be open so that we may be able to hear and see what God wants to show us.

Life is Beautiful

Life is precious. Listen and experience the resurrection at every moment – that's our journey. You may have worries and anxieties and regrets, but experience today. Tomorrow is unknown and it was designed that way.

BACK TO BASICS

September 6, 2015

Matthew 27:24-29

You Need A Foundation

I hope that you keep this in mind as a Christian, in everything we do, it is important to build a strong foundation. If the foundation is strong, you'll be able to stand through storms and hardships. But if your foundation is weak, when the difficulties come, you will not be able to stand through the difficulties of your life. So foundation is the most important thing in building. When you have a strong foundation, you can add lots of things, but when you don't have a strong foundation, you cannot. It's useless to build all these things because when it collapses, they will all collapse together. So in life you have to think about what is my foundation upon which I built my life on. What is that foundation? And we need to think about it. And then once in a while, just drop everything. You need to go back to your basics. What is the guiding principle that guides my life? And if you have fallen away from that foundation, from that guiding principle, then you need to come back to the basics. So continuously you need to do this process in your life. You live your life without realizing it. You are influenced by something or someone or some circumstances and you fall away without realizing it.

And then you need to come back to the very fundamental things, the very basic, and that is called reformation. Reformation is not something that you start... new reformation is back to basics. When Martin Luther did the protestant movement, it was reformation because the Catholic Church, for a while, had a runaway from the basic fundamental things, so he did reformation to bring back them to basics. And then in modern days, churches have fallen away from the very basics – even protestant churches, and they need to come back to the very basics... and the same thing with human beings. Have we fallen away from basic humanity? Then if we have fallen away, we need to come back to the very basic fundamental things. I'm really disturbed these days about what is going on in the world, all the shootings and the refugee crisis in Syria and in wars and children being killed in the sea to run away from their own country...

And when I look at all these things, is that the best thing that we could do as human beings? Are we building the best life as a human being? And I wonder – without really critically evaluating our world, our life – Are we just accepting it as a status quo? Can we do that? No. If we have fallen away from the basic humanity as Jesus taught, we need to come back to the very basics. And Jesus' message was always to come back to the very basic and fundamental thing. Did you know that Jesus never said anything new. Whatever Jesus said, whatever Jesus taught, they were all there. They were all in the Old Testament. There was nothing new that Jesus said to us, it was already all in the old testament. But Jesus is just telling us how far you have been away from the basic humanity.

So when Jesus taught that, people realized, “How far I’ve been away from the basic teachings of God,” and they came back to the very basics. That’s why they were amazed. When you look at the scripture today, when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as their scribes, because Jesus knew exactly what we have been lacking. That’s why people listen to Jesus. And they were amazed at Jesus’ teaching. You know, when you look at the gospel Matthew, in the beginning, Jesus’ baptism and birth story, all of these things that are right in the beginning when you take those out. The first thing Jesus did was teach – sermon on the mountain, chapter five to chapter seven is about sermon on the mountain. In other words, build your life upon these teachings.

And that’s why Jesus said, “Okay, let me tell you.” And then He went up to the mountain and He told people, “These are the things that you have to build your life on.” So from five to seven are very important chapters. So I hope that you can read almost every day, five to seven. I’m going to summarize at the end, Jesus’ teaching from five to seven, the sermon on the mountain, but those are the basics. Those are the foundations upon which we have to build our life. Not just because you’re Christian, not just because you’re religious as a human being... you have to build your life upon these things. Otherwise your life will crumble, your life will be destroyed. But when you build your life upon this basic fundamental teaching, then your life will be able to stand through all kinds of difficulties and hardships and you will become a true human being.

Sometimes, you know, I realized that humanity... are human beings so evil? No, we are good. God has created us good and we have turned into less than human beings. We need to come back. What does it mean to live as a human being sometimes when we are so influenced, without realizing, it by the culture around us. Maybe materialism, money or popularity or self centeredness. We are continuously bombarded by these values and teachings of the world and then we forget about what it means to live as a decent human being. And so we need to come back to that. We are so fragile. We're so vulnerable. we are easily influenced by our situation. You know, we think we are very strong. Like, "Oh yeah, I have a guiding principle that guides me." We think so, but when I look at myself... I'm easily swayed by the situations that I'm in.

Listen...

This summer I went to Boston and then Will, Grace, myself and my wife, the four of us went to New York. When I went to New York, people did not care about traffic signs. There's a red light but they just crossed the red light when there were no cars. In Toronto, even at night I wait, even if there is nobody there and no cars going by, I just wait until it turns green. But everybody's just going, even this beautiful lady with a suit on, she just crossed. And then a gentlemen too. They all do that, and then Will told me, "Oh Dad, that's what they do in Manhattan." And after awhile I was better than anybody crossing anywhere, "Yeah, that's what you do in Manhattan." I was walking and my wife said, "Hey, don't do that." "It's OK, we do that here in Manhattan, right?" And then I come back here, and then I keep the traffic light again.

But we human beings are so easily influenced by the circumstances we are in. We need to always come back to basics. Whether we really keep the fundamentals, and this is what Jesus said: "Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on rock. Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them, will it be like a foolish man who built his house on sand? The rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell. And great was it's fall." So you hear the words of His teaching, and you should act on them, then you build your life on the rock. But you hear the words

and do not act to them, then you are building your life on sin. And here sometimes people make mistakes.

“Ah, listening is not that important. Doing is what’s important.” So okay, if you do it, then you build on the rock. If you don’t do it, you build on the sand. And if you’re not careful right here, you fall into very sake religion, doing it for the sake of doing it, without really understanding it with no heart. Oh, doing is what’s important, but that’s not what Jesus is saying here. Here, hearing the word and doing it doesn’t mean that with your will. Like, “Now I know the words,” so with your will, you do it. That’s not what Jesus means. You internalize what you hear in you so that you become that kind of person... that’s what Jesus is saying. In other words, you meditate on it and you listen to it carefully. It becomes internalized within you. It changes you. That’s what doing is – it’s not really that you didn’t change at all and then you just do the things for the sake of doing it. You internalize the words.

Jesus never downplayed listening. Listening was very important to Jesus. That’s why Jesus said, “Let those people who have ears to hear, let them hear.” Let those people who have ears to hear, let them hear. Hearing was very important to Jesus. And Jesus also said, “My sheep listened to the voice of the shepherd.” Listening is very important and St. Paul said the same thing. “Faith comes from hearing.” Hearing is not unimportant, hearing is very important. There’s a good insight by Henri Nouwen about listening. And this is what Henry Nowan said: “The word listen in Latin is *audire*. And then from that word, actually audio, audio system, audio came from *audire*. Many English words came from Latin. So the word listen in Latin is *audire*. If we listen with full attention in which we are totally geared to listen it’s called, *obaudire*. And that’s where the word obedience comes from. So when you carefully listen and hear, then obedience follows.” The obedience doesn’t follow because you don’t hear carefully. So it is very important that we need to know what are the fundamentals. And then we need to continuously meditate on those fundamentals and then see ourselves, examine ourselves whether I am following those fundamentals or not, especially for those who are graduating from high school or university. I want you to keep these fundamentals.

Jesus Said...

I summarized into 10 the beatitude of the sermon on the mountain. I summarized it into 10. I hope that when you live your lives, you build your life upon these 10 principles, guiding principles. Doesn't matter where you are. If you keep those guiding principles, then you will make the world a much better place. I don't think the world that we have created... it's not the best place.

I mean, we did a good job in some parts, but in other parts, we're doing a very bad job. I'm really thankful and glad that Germany is taking on so many Syrian refugees. Probably most numbers Canada just doesn't match up with them. And then I saw one YouTube video and the German people were saying, "Welcome, welcome," and they had a welcoming package to the Syrian refugees. And they went through so much difficulties and they came to Germany and they gave them a welcome package. I was in tears when I was looking at that on YouTube. We need to make a better world. We as Christians especially should not be influenced by the values of this world. We should live as a human being, a decent human being, not as an animal, not as a materialist. We should live as decent human beings who help each other. That's what we are called to do. Let me share those 10 guiding principles that I summarized from Jesus' teaching on the sermon on the mountain.

First, if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also. We have no room for retaliation. We should not follow all the movies that you see, you know, where they retaliate and they kill off and then you feel good for a while... but that's how the world becomes worse and worse and worse. And that's what's happening in many parts of the world, continuous retaliation. If somebody hits you on the right cheek, turn the other, no choice. That's what we got to do as a decent human being. That's what we gotta do as a Christian. You don't get revenge. You don't get revenge in whatever way, military way or in a personal way. You don't get revenge. Somebody hits you on the right cheek. We have to give the other.

Second, love your enemies. You don't just let them be, but you have to love your enemies. That's what Jesus said. You have to love those who hate you. You have to love those who hurt you. We have no choice. That's what

Jesus did. That's our guiding principle. We have no right to hate anyone. We have to love even our enemies.

Number three, do not show off about your piety and your goodness. Piety and goodness are not to show off, like, "Oh, well I'm a man of prayer. Oh, I'm a woman of color or whatever." Spirituality, nobody should see. Nobody should know how spiritual you are, how religious you are. You don't show off your piety. You don't show off your prayer. You don't show off your almsgiving. Whatever you do with your right hand, your left hand doesn't know. Christianity or Christian zeal is not about showing off how religious you are.

Next, you cannot serve two masters. God and money... I'm sorry my friends. That's as simple as that is. You cannot serve two masters. Money is so tempting, so powerful, Jesus put that at the level of God. Either you worship or worship money, you have no choice. Which one are you going to worship? God or money? If you worship God, then you'll be able to stand through hardships. If you worship money, you will collapse when the hard time comes. Think about it. What is your guiding principle? God, or money?

And next, do not worry, but seek first the Kingdom of God. Tomorrow we don't know, but God takes care of the birds in the air, the lilies in the field. God has given us so many good things. God will take care of us, do not worry, but now seek first the Kingdom of God. That's what we do. Seek first the Kingdom of God, the reign of God, justice, love, righteousness. Those are the things that we seek after. Don't worry about what's going to happen tomorrow.

Next, do not judge so that you may not be judged. How easily we judge other people. How easily we judge each other... and with the same criteria, you will be judged. Do not judge so that you may not be judged. Always take other people with humility, and a humble attitude.

Next, ask, seek and knock. Always. Our life is about asking. Our life is about seeking. Our life is about knocking continuously, you know? We don't give up. We continually knock, then the door will be opened. Now, the impossible situation we see in the world – we continuously knock with prayer. Lord, let your justice be done. So, about five years ago, we had a refugee from Afghanistan, and two years ago we started another program

for a refugee from Syria. And so right now we are going through the process of application. But the thing is, it takes so long. Two years ago we started, and still they are not here. They have to go through all these red tapes, and we continuously seek for justice of God, for the love we continuously knock at the door.

And in everything do to others as you'd have them do to you... the golden rule. Exactly the same way. You want to be treated with respect and treat others with respect. You want to be loved then love others. That's how you'll be treated.

And next, enter through the narrow gate. We are not here for the glory and fame. No, we are not. We are not here for the glory and fame. That should not be your goal. Young people whose goal is to be a celebrity, that should not be your goal. Narrow gate, small road... That's what we are called to enter through.

And next, be fruitful, always around us with people, church, or wherever you are. Be fruitful. That's it.

These are the guiding principles. I hope that you internalize these guiding principles in your life so that you build your foundation upon rock, not on sand. May God bless you and congratulations to all those who are graduating. Keep these things in your mind and build your life... and you'll make this world a better place for everyone.

GOING FORWARD

September 13, 2015

Philippians 3:10-14

Time is Constant

Time always flows forward, never backward, and time never stops. It always moves forward. Within time, there is content and events. Time doesn't just go, there is content and events that are happening. Time also does not move randomly. Time has its own flow towards fulfillment. Time always moves towards fulfillment. It doesn't just pass by, it always moves towards fulfillment. The philosopher Mircea Eliade said, "How do I understand time? Is time just going around and around for 365 days? Is it just the same January? Is it the same on Sunday? Is it going around and around at the same place? Or is time like a linear line from A to B, just moving along?" He discovered that time is just like a spiral that turns around but it is still moving forward somewhere. Time is still moving around and around, but it doesn't stay at the same place. It moves toward a certain goal; a certain fulfillment. If time is like that then our life has to move forward as well. Our life cannot just go around and around at the same place. Moving forward means that you are pursuing something. Life that moves forward means you are pursuing something in life.

What is sad is not that you have failed to reach your goal. What is sad is that you don't have a goal to reach, that is what's sad. Sometimes we fail in fulfilling our dreams and goals, that's part of life. But the fact that we don't have a goal to achieve, that is truly sad about life. What kind of life is that? Life without a goal to reach is just like a life on hold, just staying still. We should all have a certain goal to reach.

Saint Paul said in verse 14: "I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus". That was Paul's attitude. He pressed on towards the goal. Paul lived with a clear sense of purpose in his life. To him, life was not just living to him. Life was calling. He came to this world to do this, and he pressed on towards that goal. I wondered what that goal was for Paul so I went back to verse 11, and this was what Paul said: "If somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead," that was his goal.

He wanted to attain the resurrection. Attaining resurrection was Paul's goal in life. And I don't think Paul meant resurrection in a narrow sense of the word, for example, a dead person coming alive. That's a resurrection, but I think he has a broader sense of the word. To him, the resurrection was not just a dead person coming alive. To Paul the resurrection meant that everything comes alive.

When you look at Paul's theology, it is mainly focused on resurrection. It was your life coming alive. So you don't acquire resurrection after you die, you attain resurrection right now in the present time. You can experience the power of resurrection, not when you die, but instead right here, where you are in the present time.

Let us look at verse 10. He said: "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection". I want to know now, not later. I want to know the power of his resurrection now. In Paul's mind, resurrection is what's happening right now and he wants to know that power.

So to Paul, the resurrection was not just a phenomenon of a dead person coming alive, but the power that enlightens our whole existence. When the power of resurrection comes upon us, everything within us comes alive. You come alive. When the power of resurrection comes upon us, every cell of our body comes alive. My rational comes alive. My consciousness is awakened. My soul dances with joy and aliveness. That is the power of resurrection. Only then, when the power of resurrection comes upon us, does our life move forward. We cannot make our lives move forward. When the power of resurrection comes upon us, it pushes us to move forward. When we sail through the storms and challenges of our life by our own strength, we become drained. We become tired and give up. We cannot move forward. I need a power within me that energizes my life to move forward. That's why I see so many people with dreams and visions when they were younger, but they were disappointed once too often, and they get discouraged and they feel powerless, helpless and hopeless. And then in the middle of their lives, they give up on their dream. I had that dream, but not anymore. They just coast along.

Dreams and Visions

Yesterday I had a visitation and a man said “I probably earn 10 times more than you. But I need a dream. I need a vision. I need meaning in life”. That’s what we need. But when we experience so many failures, we give up on our dreams. I’ll just maintain the status quo as long as there’s no problem with it and I’ll be satisfied. I just want to live my life like this until I die. We give up our dreams. They’re satisfied with maintaining the status quo. Do you want to finish your life having your life on hold? No.

In my life, I want to do something that of which I want to do. I have to do something that is meaningful. No matter how difficult that may be, it’s what I want to do with the life given to me. I don’t want to just live it. I want to think about what I want to do with my life. I cannot just be satisfied with false satisfaction. This is what Saint Paul said: “Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to make it my own. I press on towards the goal”. If the power of resurrection works in us, we are not fooled by the false satisfaction and the false destination. We have yet to arrive at our destination. We know that an oasis is only a temporary place to enjoy, but that is not our final destination. You have to move forward. You have a journey to take. You can’t just stay there enjoying temporary pleasure and temporary safety. People who prepare for marathons don’t just prepare themselves for the beginning of the marathon or the middle of the marathon. Everybody will be able to run well in the middle, so runners prepare for the last 10-20 minutes and give their whole effort. Olympic swimmers don’t prepare for the game in the middle. Everybody swims well in the middle, but in the last 10th of second, they work so hard.

What is your goal? What is your dream? You probably used to have one – did you give up on it now? I don’t even know what my goal is. We need to really think about what we’re living for. For the last journey, we have to give our best effort. What’s done is done, don’t look back. You have a journey ahead of you to take. You have a road ahead of you to walk. Saint Paul said: “Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward. What lies ahead, I press on”. Forget the failures or fear that you have and start fresh from today. Think about what you want to do with your life and pursue that dream, press on towards that goal. If that is a holy dream it will be better, but even if it not a holy dream, whatever it is, set a goal and live towards that.

Passion from Christ

We all have different goals and different callings of life. Please, don't give up. Don't get settled down with just maintaining the status quo. Let the power of resurrection work in you. Then you will have courage that the power of resurrection will work in you. The way you see your life will change. You will have energy, vision, passion, excitement, even for the tiniest things. I don't know how we get that but I believe that this the grace of Jesus Christ. Why do I have passion? Why do I have such a dream and vision? It's probably because of the grace of Jesus Christ who gave the power of resurrection within us. Even when you're tired and drained, you feel the power that moves you forward. Having no dream and all that means that you became a victim of fear, that's why you don't set up a goal. Be courageous. Stand up again, move forward, and you can do it with God's power. Not by yourself because you'll be drained. But with the power of resurrection, you can move forward. That's what I would like to see in your life.

CHANGE THAT BRINGS ABOUT CHANGE

October 25, 2015

Exodus 4:10-17

1 Corinthians 15:9-10

Leaders Through Christ

Today I was really impressed by the coffee house community hour. I saw the potential of this community, what we can do when we gather our resources together and our spirit together. I think we can do so many amazing things. So I really am thankful for the people who organized that. Also I thank you for the spirit of generosity. I sensed that yesterday, the spirit of generosity. You know, as you put some of your talents and resources together, we can build this community very well. Many people I would like to thank. Marcelo, thank you very much.

It was a generous gift of your arts. At first, you know at the fundraising, thought it wouldn't get sold very well. But his art, everything was sold and I bought one. I'm amazed at the how you do that, how you do things like that, is it in your brain? It just boggles my mind. I don't even know how to put on that tag to put on the wall. You gotta help me. So I was quite impressed by that.

And then today, we are ordaining three elders, Chris, Michelle and Simon. You are going to define new way of looking at Jesus, looking at church. I think you will define new way's of doing ministry, not just within the church, but outside of the church. It will bring justice, peace, and also great love of God in a very fresh, new way. I'm very, very looking forward to your leadership for the church. We have nine elders and these are the pillars who will make a difference. Not only in this church but outside for the world. So I'd like to invite all the elders, including three new elders. Stand up for a moment. Can you stand up, please?

What is missing? Oh yeah, me too. Okay. These nine people are the ones that you have elected to be your leaders. I am really thankful for their generosity and contribution to making this church a church that defines new history, church that defines new ministry, the church that defines new

humanity. I hope that all of us are all together so that we can build. This is a life that God has painted. That is a kind of life that we are going to promote, not the life that world has painted. We have been blinded for so many years. So these are the people who do that. Thank you very much.

Leadership is very important. So for that sense, I'd like to share with you about leadership. I chose two people who are the people who made the difference, who define new ministry actually. They are Moses and St. Paul. These two people are not just leaders who maintain, they were not managers who just maintain what is going on, but they're the ones who brought about new history. Moses brought about new history about Israel, taking them out of Egypt. St. Paul built a church and he was the one who started a new kind of movement. Some people say that Christianity actually began with St. Paul because Jesus never wanted to build new religion in a way. Jesus came to us to teach us about what life should be. St. Paul kind of translated Jesus' teaching into church's understanding, so he wrote a half of the New Testament.

So he was the one who defined a new ministry. Then also Moses, same thing. So we even think that, for Moses, the Messiah will be like Moses. So these two people I've chosen to think about are great leaders. Big people who have influenced, who had a profound influence on many, many people in history. Not just in the church but in history. These two people, when I look at their leadership, it is strange both of them didn't fit. They didn't feel that they fit for the ministry. Moses said this "I have never been eloquent, neither in the past, nor even now that you have spoken to your servant, but I'm slow of speech and slow of tongue." Moses didn't think that he was fit for the ministry. St. Paul said exactly the same thing, "For I am the least of the apostles unfit to be called an apostle." These two great leaders felt that they were unfit for the ministry. Then seeing that I realized that Christian leadership is not about my ability or my confidence in my ability. That's what I realized. Ah, Christian leadership is different. Yes, God wants to bring about changes in the world through the leaders, but not using their capability necessarily.

God uses more of their humility than capability. As Christian leaders, we don't display our own power, strength and ability. We display God's power, God's strength and God's wisdom.

Change Begins With The Mirror

We don't have brilliant ideas or power to do what God wants to do. We often feel overwhelmed. Every day I feel overwhelmed. Every moment I feel unfit for this huge giant work that God wants to do through the church. That's how I feel almost everyday, so we don't have within us that capability to do that. Then how does God work to achieve what he wants to do, what he wants to achieve? This is what I realized. God works by changing the leaders themselves. That's how God works. God works very powerfully, transforming each leader and through that transforming power, he transforms others. That's how God works. Moses was weak, he felt unfit, he cannot speak, he was ineloquent, he felt. But God works through him with a tremendous transforming power. Same thing with St. Paul. God works through St. Paul with his transforming power. Whoever wants to be the leader has to go through this kind of change through the transforming power of God. They are the leaders.

Sometimes, some people misunderstand that our leadership, oh, you know, I work hard, but because I'm a leader now, I don't need to change. I got to go out and then change other people. That's not how Christian leadership works. Christian leadership, as we become leaders, we change more and more and more and through that, change occurs. So change is contagious. When I change, my family changes. When I change, my community changes. When I change, the society changes. When I change, the world changes. I may not be able to change others, but I can change. We're not here to go out and change other people. No one can change anybody else. Only when I change, they change. If parents change, children will change. Don't try to change your children when you don't change. Some people say this ridiculous thing, "I don't go to church but I want you to go to church. I don't come to church for my sake, I come to church for my children sake." It doesn't make sense. When we change, people around me changes.

We have Alex here, remember Alex? He once came to TBS, Tuesday Bible study. We were talking about the theology and all that, and this was what he said, and we were all amused and pleasantly surprised by the wisdom of that... "Trying to change somebody, when you yourself don't go through that change, is violence." How true that is. He's right here. Person that gets that wisdom. Try to change somebody when you yourself don't change, is violence. How much of violence we commit. That's what Pharisees did.

They didn't want to change. Then ultimately they try to change other people and ultimately killed Jesus.

There's an old gospel song which I used to sing all the time, so we'll sing it after the sermon. It's 'Me, O Lord'. The words go like this, "It's me, it's me O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. Not my mother, not my father, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. Not my brother, not my sister, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer." It's me, not anybody else in need of prayer. I think last week, you know, I speak so much these days so I don't know where I spoke something. Probably here, I think I said that. I said, "You know, being happy is a moral responsibility." Yeah, being happy is a moral responsibility. When I'm happy, others become happy. When I'm unhappy, we make everybody else miserable.

When I change, other people change. When you come home, when you have a bright smile, you make everybody else smile. But when you come home with all this frown, you come home and everybody, all of a sudden, it becomes so dark and depressed. So being happy is a moral responsibility. Change, whatever change happens within me brings about change in other people. Instead of trying to make changes, we let the grace of God work in me, so that same grace may work in other people.

This is what St. Paul confessed, "But by the grace of God, I am what I am and His grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them – though it was not I, but the grace of God that is within me." Real change happens when grace of God works. Not when I work, only when grace of God works, then real change happens.

We all feel that we are not good enough. As I shared on Friday, we live in the culture of scarcity. As somebody said, the first thing we say when we wake up is "I didn't get enough sleep" and the last thing we say as we, as we hit the pillow is "I didn't get enough done". As soon as you wake up, until you die, we are not enough. We live in the culture of scarcity. We are thankful because we are changing by the grace of God. We are good enough, you're good enough, by the grace of God. Michelle, Simon, Chris, you are good enough, by the grace of God. You may feel that I'm unfit for the ministry, but you're good enough when there is God's grace. All of us are good enough when God's grace works within us. That is a spiritual leadership and that kind of leadership only can bring about change deep

within a person. We are not interested in institutional change. We are interested in the change of the soul of each person and I'm very thankful for the leadership in this church.

BE A FOOL

November 1, 2015

1 Corinthians 3:18-20

Spiritual Journey

We have researched and concluded the study of Mark last Friday and we made a conclusion of what Mark was trying to get across. And this is a little bit of application of what we discovered as a result of our study together for last six weeks. We truly explored how the author, Mark, how he saw Jesus and how he presented the Gospel. This is a real application in our lives. What we learn in Mark and how it works out in our daily living. St Paul said to not deceive yourself. I realized that we can deceive ourselves. We think we're honest to ourselves, but without even realizing it, we can deceive ourselves. That's why Paul warns to not deceive yourself. Similarly, Socrates also said, know yourself. He probably said that because it is difficult to know ourselves and difficult to know that I'm not deceiving myself. These philosophers and St Paul said to not deceive yourself know yourself.

I think the spiritual journey is the journey to fullness. Spiritual journey has two parts. One is to get to know God, but another part of the journey which is equally important is to get to know yourself. So spiritual journey is also to discover yourself, to find yourself. If you just emphasize one without the other. For example, if you emphasize only on God, you become fanatic. You don't know yourself. If you emphasize only on yourself rather than God, then it becomes too devastating. When you discover yourself, it can be quite devastating. So spiritual journey is both getting to know God and also getting to getting to know yourself. That was a spiritual journey of Saint Paul. He lived his life deceiving himself. He didn't think that he was deceiving himself. I don't mean that he lived a double life. No, he thought he lived one kind of life, but he was actually deceiving himself. He didn't know who he really was. He thought he did. He thought he did. How many of how many of us are like that? We think we know, but sometimes we may continuously deceive ourselves.

Contradiction

When he was awakened to himself, he saw what he was like before and this is what he thought he was: "If anyone else has reason to be confident in the self," I translated flesh into self because that's what it meant. "If anyone else has reason to be confident in myself, I have more.

Circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews as to the law, a Pharisee as to zeal, a persecutor of the church as to righteousness under the law, blameless". That was almost like a formula for him. See, if somebody asks him who are you, then he would have answered with this. If somebody asked you, who are you, then you may have certain things or which school you graduated from and who's your parents are. It was the clothes he wore, but it wasn't him. Clothes hanger cannot mistake who it is by the clothes it hangs. We wear different clothes, but they're only shells and not our true identity. Paul lived all this life thinking that his shells were from him. In that way he deceived himself.

But one day he discovered that he was doing that. Many of us don't even discover that many of us live our lives without really knowing who I am and then just die. But Paul discovered the truth about himself. I think that is amazing. That's great. Then, after he discovered himself, this was what he said: "I regard them as rubbish". They are the ones that we just read. He was a Pharisee and all these things. He regards them as rubbish, useless to define who I am. All those things are useless to truly know who I am because shells come just like you change your clothes every day. His righteousness comes and goes. He thought he was righteous, but he wasn't righteous. He was persecuting God's people. He thought that that was a righteous thing to do. Morality comes and goes. Everything that we have, shells come and go. He wasn't able to go beyond the shells that he wore was able to see his inner self. Not many of us can do that, but he went on the shelves and he was looking yet himself and this was, what is it?

I do not understand my own actions for I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing that I hate. he saw his own contradiction. I'm a man of contradiction, not a man of integrity. I'm a man of contradiction. He discovered, so Paul's testimony is very different from the testimonies that most of us here are used to hearing. I used to be bad. I used to smoke, I used to drink. I used to do this and that, but now after I met Christ, now I

don't know all of those things. I'm good. But Paul's testimony was exactly opposite. I thought I was good. I thought I was living faithfully, living a righteous life, but after I met Christ, I realized that I'm a man of contradiction.

A very opposite testimony that you hear. When he was not awakened, he didn't have any struggle, he thought he was doing very well He lived not his true self, but the self he wanted to put on. He wasn't himself. He lived the life that he wanted to put on, but ultimately he had the courage to admit who he really was and embraced his struggle and boldly let us know his struggle and I'm thankful that Paul did. If Paul shied away from it, then we would not have known who we really are. Like Paul said, that great man, the man who founded Christianity, he boldly courageously said what he was inside. Now we have confidence.

God's Grace

We also struggle with our shortcomings, our weaknesses, and our own darkness. It is very hard to admit that. It's much easier to hide them than confronting them. It is much easier to do this or that to confirm that I am okay than admitting our helpless and sometimes hopeless reality of our true self. We paint a beautiful picture of ourselves and try so hard to live that picture, to live out that picture, whatever does not fit that picture, we throw away or we hide them away and in the process of doing that, we're not being true to ourselves, we are deceiving ourselves. We become a stranger to ourselves. Sometimes you look in the mirror and see yourself. Who are you? Who are you? We become a stranger to ourselves. When you don't feel at home with who we are, there's a huge gap between the image that you put on and what is going on inside.

The spiritual journey is to learn to see our inner self-accepted and embrace our honest struggle. In spirituality, we are achieving a condition where we can say it is all right not to be perfect. It is all right not to be the person my father or my mother wants me to be. It is all right to have our own brokenness. You don't need to deceive ourselves. We think we're smart enough to deal with our own inner contradiction, but be careful as you try to deal with your own inner contradiction, with your own wisdom as you may create a deeper contradiction in yourself. Saint Paul said, he catches the wise in their craftiness and again, the Lord. Lord knows the thoughts of the

wise they are futile. When Paul discovered his own inner contradiction inside, instead of dealing with it with his own wisdom, he turned to God like a fool. He's simply turned to God instead of using his brain to deal with his own contradiction. He just turned to God and as he turned to God, Huh? He discovers something else. Not only his inner contradiction, but something else starts appearing. You know what that is? God's grace. God's grace. When he saw his true self with that, he saw God's grace. That's why this he said this, by the grace of God, I am what I am. He found that grace to make him who he is. Not who he pretends to be that grace gave him the power and the empowerment to be who he is.

He discovered God's grace. Not only his self-contradiction. God's grace gave him the courage. My friends. It is really, really hard to see our darkness, our weakness, our selfishness, our pride with our bare eyes. It is really difficult to admit that and see that. That's why even though we are weak, we pretend that we are strong. Even though we are insecure, we pretend that we are very confident. Even though we are selfish, sometimes we have to pretend to that we are generous. Even though you're not righteous, we have to pretend that we have everything together. But with grace, we don't need that protection. I'll want to tell you the most important truth for you not to forget ever in your life. The most basic thing about the true wisdom is that I cannot save myself. I cannot save myself. That is the most important truth that all of you have to remember the rest of your lives. People have a hard time accepting it. Theoretically, they may agree, but they don't truly accept this. The moment they see nakedly that they cannot see themselves, they become devastated.

Embrace Vulnerability

The moment people realized that "I cannot see myself," they get devastated, they've fallen into deep despair. Only God's grace can lead us to the wisdom to know that we cannot save ourselves. That's what Jesus showed on the cross, that's what Jesus showed on the cross. People at the bottom, Jesus, why don't you save yourself, if you're the saviour? And Jesus simply said "I cannot save myself," and he died on the cross and he showed to the world, we human beings cannot save ourselves and our Saviour showed that. That is a message of the cross. That's a big difference between Superman and Jesus. That is the difference in the Gospel of Superman and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus simply died on the cross. Embracing his own vulnerability, embracing his death.

But you know what happened when Jesus did that, God's power was revealed. When Jesus did that God's power was manifested and that power raised him from the dead. Jesus did not save us with his own power. Jesus simply shows that we human beings can not save ourselves and he was faithful to the end and in God's power saved all of us. He showed how important it is for us to embrace our own vulnerability. That cross that showed the ultimate vulnerability of the human being released the power of resurrection. Nothing else could release the power of resurrection. Power of the cross was not the power of Jesus, nor the power of any human being, but the power of God. And Jesus died on the cross and then Paul knowing his own spiritual journey, knowing his own contradiction, he captured what Jesus did so sharply and let us know, and this is what he said. "Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Corinthians 1:22-24)

Foolishness is wiser than human wisdom and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. He understood the power of the cross. Oh, my goodness. How did he do that? Jesus simply died on the cross but how did St. Paul come out with this theological insight? Truth, because he himself went through that journey. So, my friends, when you embrace your vulnerability, you'll see God's power. When you run away from your vulnerability, you'll forever live with that vulnerability, but when you embrace your vulnerability, you'll be able to see God's power. You won't be devastated when you're in a vulnerable situation. Don't feel too sorry for yourself. God's power will be manifested. There's another confession of St. Paul related to this message. Once he went up to the third heaven, I don't know what third heaven is, and Paul himself does not really know. I don't know what it is, but somehow he was caught up in the third heaven, almost like paradise.

Reflection

So he experienced the power of the divine. Immediately after that experience of going up to the third heaven, you know what he experienced? He experienced the thorn in the flesh. And St. Paul said, Satan gave me this thorn. He prayed three times to get rid of this thorn, but God did not get rid of that thorn. And there he understood this wisdom and this was what God gave him. Let us hear what is said. "But he said to me,

'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:9-10) Whenever you are strong, you will be weak. Whenever you are weak then God is strong and you will become strong. The people who pretend to be strong, they are not strong. They have a tremendous insecurity. They don't deal with their vulnerability and insecurity. That's why they pretend to be strong, so on the surface of you see strong people. They are not strong people rather they are weak. All the bullies, they are the weakest of all. Real power comes when we are weak. My foolishness is God's wisdom. It is alright to be a fool. Be a fool for Christ.

BEYOND OUR CIRCUMSTANCES

January 17, 2016

Scripture Passage Unavailable

Victims

Are we victims of our environment? Sometimes I wonder. Do we have no choice but to be shaped and determined by the environment we're in? Do we have the freedom to be different, in spite of our environment? Or are we just a product of our own environment? We know that our environments play a very big role in our lives. The kind of family you're born into, in a way, you're very much shaped by the family you're born into or your parents, the parents that you have. They taught you, they have instilled certain values within you so depending on the kind of parents that you have, your life is shaped and formed in some ways. Also, the friends that we associate with, certain friends, they have influenced you to be the person that you are now. And also our financial situations, if you're ill or sick. That also influences you tremendously. And our geopolitical situations around us. All these things have had profound and long-lasting effects, and have shaped who I am. They colour the way we think, they put a lens on the way we see the world, and they shape the kind of value we live with. So I see a lot of people that are just a product of their environment. So I wonder whether we have a certain freedom to be on our own. Is there a possibility that we think independently? Are we becoming victims of our own environment? For example, if your parents had such a bad lifestyle and that affected you so much that you have kind of built a certain kind of lifestyle or attitude in life? Those kinds of experiences we have made the people we are.

If you were deceived in a big way, you will have a hard time trusting people because he had a bad experience. In your life, if you have experienced tremendous failure, you will probably hesitate very much to take risks and take on challenges in life because you're too scared of the failures that you had. And people who had really, really bad relationships in their lives will be scared of having intimate and meaningful relationships with other people because they are affected by the relationship that they had. People who have financial problems, they will be focused on survival. I see that more in KSM, Korean speaking congregation. Their financial situations are not

necessarily very good, so they constantly think about their survival in society. One person that I know has a store, but it's not going very well. Every day only a few customers come and, they're constantly worrying about what's going to happen. Their rent goes out every month and "How am I going to survive? Can I survive? Immigrants have a particular mindset because of their harsh immigrant life. I'm sure many of you experienced your parents. They had a harsh life, it's almost a dehumanized life. When you look at the Korean immigrant history here in Toronto, when they first came, there was a law in Korea. You could only take out \$200. What can you do with \$200? When I arrived here, uh, I only had \$400. I bought a desk and a bed, I had nothing left. A lot of people were like that so they couldn't even start a store. What they did was a menial labour job in a factory. They saved money as much as possible, they didn't spend any money and then finally they opened a store. When they opened the store, they were a little better financially, but look at their lifestyle. from 7,8 in the morning until 11 at night. No break. No vacation. How can anybody survive from seven in the morning until 11:00 every day for 365 days? That's how they survived. The immigrant lifestyle is harsh, so their mentality is set in a certain way because of their immigrant situation.

Or Product

Are we simply the product of our environment? Are we predetermined in that way? Do we have free will? Free thinking? Free choice? Or is it just an illusion, or just wishful thinking? Maybe. In fact, that's what we see in many people around us. I often see only the product of environment, not independent thinkers, not people who have overcome their environments, but they are just a part of their environment. It may be wishful thinking. I hope that it's not wishful thinking. I mean, that's what I see, but I want to. I don't want to take what I see as a, as a truth. I want to see the scripture has a truth. I do believe the scriptures that I want to hold onto the scripture rather than a what I see. I don't think St Paul would have agreed that we are simply the victims of our environment. He was the person who overcame his own harsh environment to be the disciple of Jesus Christ, but he himself was once the victim of the environment. He was completely blinded and completely controlled, a shaped by the environment that he was in the environment to set certain values and standards. And this is what is good, and in St Paul believed that that was what is good and that will chip it, the value that I have to pursue. So all his life, he pursued that dream goal and vision and that is set by the environment rather than it

came from within himself. He was set by the environment. People said that that was a good thing to do. So he was at the top of it. He really did excel. He did really well, but when he got to the top, what he realized was that was not the law. Finally, I have arrived here. You sort of seeing that she saw that I was simply the victim of my own environment. That's what he saw. I was simply the product of the environment. And then he realized that that's garbage. That's rubbish. Refuse. He decided not to be the victim of the environment. He studied the new choice. He studied new life. This time, not by what people say, said this time by what he chose, by what he believed.

Restored through Prayer

So I can see that St Paul was a victim of his environment. In today's passage, this is sad, let us look at this passage. We are treated as impostors and yet are true as unknown and yet are well known as dying and see you alive as punished and yet not killed as sorrowful yet always rejoicing as poor, yet making many rich as having nothing and yet possessing everything. I divided this scripture into two and this what I came with, a posters, true unknown, well known, tying live punished, not killed, sorrowful, rejoicing, poor, making many rich, having nothing, possessing everything left side and right side, totally opposite, left, left side was the environment, right side was this life. Just looking at that realize that he was not the product and victim of his own environment. I do believe that Christian teaching is that we can overcome our own environment and become the best person we can be. What kind of person do you want to be? The person that everybody admires or the person that is faithful and truthful to yourself. This is what Jesus said in the world. You may have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

That was what Jesus believed and Jesus actually lived out his life day by day, overcoming his circumstances. About a month or two ago, a lady in our congregation came up to me and said to me, inky, all my friends, if I follow their path, I can easily make a half million a year, but she said, I have not. I have decided not to follow that. I've decided to live my own life because by doing that I lose my life. I sack her. I have to sacrifice everything. So she decided to take her own choice. I think that's courage. It was refreshing to hear that. That is Tessa, gays being the victim of the environment, just following everybody else. That is like a salmon going against the stream. I think that's cool. She's sitting right here today. How

did? How did that in the world? You may have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I've overcome the world. How did he do that? Prayer. Prayer was this powerful weapon. He never let himself down by just taking all the garbage from the world. He got a lot of garbage from the world. He saw the world, he's observed the kinds of things they do, the kind of things they say, observed, like an existential philosopher. They all saw that is observed. The word that we're living is observed, and the Jesus saw the, uh, the world was observed too. So he took a lot of garbage every day from the world. He knew that. No, that's not right. No, that's not it. No, that's not true. That's not the way you live. He knew that but took off kind of garbage is. He received all kinds of garbage, just garbage from the world. People criticized him. People challenged him. Pupils spread all kinds of false rumours about him. They tried to trap him and even try to kill them and she just never let that garbage sink into the soul and be poisoned by this garbage.

He went to God in prayer. His damage spirit was restored in his prayer. His own self-was healed and refreshed by the renewing power of the spirit, his quiet time and in his prayer or his weapons to find balance in life again. Every now and said, every time she just went to prayer. What did he hear? He said he must. He might have or must have heard this. You are my beloved son with whom I'm well pleased. I think that's what Jesus heard every time when he went to pray, not shaped by the way people treated him, people might have treated him as an imposter spot. He was true.

Reflection

Our environment can be harsh. He may receive much garbage in life, endless. This pressure of life, the guilt we cannot shake off or isn't an and anxieties that paralyze us and just feeling of powerlessness and the overall feeling of being overwhelmed. These things can take away the strength to go on. Don't let these things influence you. Otherwise, you will become victims of your own environment. Fight it, protest against it, require time and prayer, fine yourselves. The joy of life will be restored. The new strength will arise from within and you hope will brighten our perspective and you'll be able to overcome the world. I just past my birthday and realize that time is short. I gotta live my life. I cannot entertain other people anymore. I got to live my life. I had known him many years left on the 50 years maybe we got our live our life. Don't just follow what people do. Don't just follow the pattern of this world. Let us be transformed by the renewing

of our minds and let us really live our lives that makes us happy, joyful, and meaningful.

NO ONE CAN LIVE WITHOUT FORGIVENESS

March 13, 2016

Matthew 6:14-15

No One Can Live Without Forgiveness

No one can live without forgiveness. Why? Because we're not perfect. No one is perfect. We all make mistakes. We all do things or did things we should have never done. We all said things we should never have said. We all hurt others intentionally or unintentionally, but whether you hurt others intentionally or unintentionally doesn't matter because being hurt is being hurt. We are not trying to determine who's right or who's wrong. We all have regrets. We all have our own painful past. We want to forget and change it or redo it,

But we can't, simply, we cannot do that. That's why we need forgiveness. Otherwise, the burden of guilt, shame and regrets will be, too much to bear. They'll eat us up and they will consume us, and a lot of people do lots of things to deal with their own guilt, shame and regret. Sometimes they punish themselves. They may feel good if they punish themselves for their wrongdoing, but by doing that, we cannot get rid of the burden of guilt or even lighten the burden of guilt. We don't feel any better. Maybe when you punish yourself, maybe then, but soon you don't. You realize that you don't feel any better. Sometimes we are trying to do wonderful things, great things to compensate for the wrongdoing, so we did, but you can never do that. You can never undo wrongdoings that you did by doing wonderful things. It's just playing games that doesn't cancel out what we did in the past and sometimes we try to justify ourselves saying that, oh, it wasn't really, really my fault. I didn't want do it, but she made it. She made me do it, or he made me do it, like Adam in the Bible, you know, she gave me this fruit.

Dealing with Guilt, Shame and Regrets

Well, sometimes we justify ourselves saying that, oh, it's all circumstances in that circumstance. I have no choice but to do so, but you always have a choice. By doing that, we don't feel any better or our situation doesn't get any better. No matter how hard we try, we know that we cannot take off an ounce of the weight, of the burden of guilt and shame and regrets. Maybe

guilt, shame and regrets are something that we have to suffer through. Maybe. Maybe there's no other way. There is no way around it, there's no way to ignore it and avoid they won't disappear. They'll still be there. The more you play blind eyes to them, the more deeply they will torment you. The moment we open our eyes it's right there. Gazing hard at us.

We will always encounter incidents, events, people, and situations that trigger off our guilt, shame and regrets. And then we enter again into dark tunnel of mourning and grief. I once went to Ohio, Columbus Ohio. It was a listening skill lab. So for a whole week I got training for the listening skill and it was wonderful time. The guest speaker was talking about his own painful experience. That once, he had a lecture, and then a couple was coming in and then saw them. They were the ones who gave him so much pain and hardship. After the lecture he pulled a facade. And then said very nicely and kind of how are you, how are you doing? long time, no see every day and chit chatted for sometime. So he did very well. When he came back to the hotel, all of a sudden he had so many hives all over his body and he was heated up and had a fever and he was trembling and he realized that there was still pain left in him. That pain that was caused by this couple, we realized that was within us. Cannot be easily undone. Even our guilt, shame and regress don't just disappear just because we wish them away. They follow us around and surprisingly they surface sometimes and drive us into deep darkness and even despair.

Trust in God's Forgiveness

The problem is there is nothing we can do that's a problem. There is nothing we can do about it. We cannot forgive ourselves. Can you. You may say that you forgive yourself, but you still feel miserable. You cannot forgive yourself. You cannot undo what you did. You cannot change what happened. You cannot get rid of guilt shame and regrets without decision and willpower. You cannot say, "oh from today. I'm going to forget about it." You can't do. You cannot make decision on things like that. That's why we need forgiveness. That's where I believe God's forgiveness comes in. Not really. There's nothing that we can do but there is God's forgiveness, but unfortunately many people don't trust in God's forgiveness. They try on their own to deal with their own shame, guilt and regrets. They don't believe there is a power in God's forgiveness.

Of course, if we can get forgiveness from the people that we hurt, then that'll be great, but thing is it is impossible. Sometimes we don't even know we whom we hurt and sometimes the people that we hurt are not around so it's impossible to do so, so we come to God's forgiveness. As we come to God's forgiveness, something strange happens, something wonderful happens. Something we can not do happens within us. Of course, Guilt shame and regrets may not simply disappear just because you come to God's forgiveness. They don't just disappear, but they try not to remain as they are. They change somehow their face, the guilt, shame and regrets change. How do they change? They change into a broken spirit, a broken heart. When we come to God with humility, when God's forgiveness works within us, then guilt, shame and regrets, turn into a broken heart, and this broken heart brings about forgiving heart. This is a process of that I cannot make on my own, but when we come to God, this happens. Guilt turns into broken heart and broken heart creates and forms within us the forgiving heart.

A Forgiving Heart allows you to Give and Receive Forgiveness

That's what Jesus meant today in today's passage. If you read it again, "for if you forgive others their trespasses or their mistakes may say, your heavenly father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others, neither will your father forgive your trespasses. Jesus is not talking about forgiving acts, forgiving behavior. Oh, you forgave that, so I'll forgive you a and you didn't forgive that and I won't forgive you. That's not what Jesus means. Jesus is saying that if you have forgiving heart, then you can forgive others and also you can receive forgiveness, forgiveness from God, but if you don't have forgiving heart, you cannot forgive others and that you cannot receive forgiveness from God either. That's what he's saying whether you have forgiving heart or not, depending on whether you have forgiving heart or not, you cannot forgive others or you can forgive others or you can receive forgiveness from God or you cannot receive forgiveness. Forgiveness from God. Important thing is forgiving heart and that forgiving heart is created when you come to God's forgiveness and that guilt shame and regret turn into forgiving heart.

So many people live with a hardened heart. They just simply don't know how to forgive. They just simply don't know how to receive forgiveness. This world is filled with people with hardened hearts, revenge, anger, animosity, hatred, they're continuously ready to attack each other. Just a

little thing fires up there are so angry and get back to you. This world has become such a world of hatred, hardened heart. By ignoring guilt shame and regrets, we develop hardened heart. Then we become people who don't know forgiveness. Then these things will consume us and destroy our heart. That's not the way to live. That's not the way to build community. This is not the way we relate to each other by ignoring them, by justifying them by simply suffering them will not help us deal with our guilt, shame and regret. They will torment us within us and slowly make us people we don't want to be, but with humility and faith. When we come to God, God helps our guilt, shame and regrets change into broken heart, and then we'll experience the power of God's forgiveness. God is alive, God is alive and God's forgiveness is alive.

Through a Forgiving Heart we can Finally be Free

What, we cannot do God did and God does. And through forgiving heart we can finally be free, free from our own guilt, shame and regrets. And we are free to embrace others and forgive others,

You wanna see concrete example in the scripture? The concrete example is David. David lived with his guilt and shame and regret, but he came to God for forgiveness and this is what he prayed, "create in me a clean heart, oh God and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain in me a willing spirit." He didn't try to deal with his own guilt, just leave it for awhile. He didn't try to deal with guilt on his own and shame he came to God. This is action of David coming to God instead of suffering all by himself or justifying, he just came humbly came to God. Restore Spirit within me. Do not cast me away from you create in me a clean heart. When he did that, he realized the broken spirit is formed within him. That guilt turned into broken spirit. He experienced and that broken spirit he recognize and so he's next passage. He said this, "for you have no delight in sacrifice. If I were to give a burnt offering, you will not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart. O God, you will not despise" Within himself. saw broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, but also he realized that God will not despise that.

That's different from guilt. That's different from guilt. Jesus once said, "blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God. That poor in spirit is broken heart, broken spirit. It is the heart that is formed within us. When we come to God's forgiveness. Let us come to God's forgiveness. Do you have a heart to forgive others or to have a hard time forgiving others? Do you forgive your parents? Do you forgive people who hurt you? Have you received true forgiveness from God? God can make you free.

JOURNEY OF BEING ALONE

March 20, 2016

Mark 11:1-11

Loneliness is a Silent Killer of Modern Society

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

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

Social Media puts on a Facade to Hide our Loneliness

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

Jesus Experienced Total Abandonment

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

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

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

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

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

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

Distractions Does not Get rid of Loneliness

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

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

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

These two questions are very important questions and we have to always ask ourselves, who am I and what do I want to do? When these questions are not answered, that hollowness and emptiness will continue. It doesn't matter how high you go up. Doesn't matter how many friends you have. It doesn't matter how great time you have in your life. When these two questions are not answered, your hollowness will not be filled up. Who am I and what do I want to do? The problem is the answer does not come easily. Nor can we find it from books or even life experiences. No. The

understanding of who we are and what we really want to do is lifetime journey. It's a lifetime journey, but unfortunately many people don't think about this. They say they are too busy. Just an excuse. You're just making excuses. You just are scared, scared, so deadly scared of facing these questions. We are scared of looking at our hollowness because you will be completely submerged into it because there doesn't seem to be an easy answer, so people don't make time to be unknown and also when they are alone they don't know what to do. Okay, I'm alone. What am I supposed to do? We don't know. Just being alone.

Jesus Knew Exactly Who he Was

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

The world abandoned Jesus. Oh my goodness. That's hard. When you're abandoned by the world, that's hard to take. The world abandoned Jesus

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

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

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

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

Steve Jobs Anecdote

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

TO BEGIN IS TO END

September 4, 2016

Ephesians 4: 17-24

A New Beginning

Today is the first day of September. September is kind of new beginning. January is the beginning of the chronological year, but September is another kind of a new beginning for a lot of us. The hot Summer is over and you feel the cool air in the morning and in the evening. Last night I went out just to walk around for about five or ten minutes. It was so beautiful. We feel that coolness in the air already. Students enter into a different grade and some students start university life. Wow. That's a very, very different life from high school. So you're going to start a new kind of journey in a new place, maybe Kitchener, Waterloo or London or Queens. Some students experienced totally new journeys. Some people are getting married and others have new babies. Some people bought their first house and some people start a totally new direction, new life direction, completely different life direction. A lot of changes. All the things that I mentioned just now is what's happening within our own community. That's what people are going through within our own community. These are all examples of kinds of new beginnings.

Beginning and the End

I'd like to reflect on the beginning today. T.S. Elliot said, "what we call the beginning is often the end, and to make an end is to make a beginning". The end is where we start from. We realize that the beginning and the ending are closely connected. Without the ending, the beginning cannot happen. In today's scripture passage, St Paul also said, "put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts". He tells us to end the old life. And then he said, "be renewed in the spirit of your minds and to clothe yourself within yourself". So and the old self and then begin the new self. So he's also talking about ending and beginning. They're closely connected with each other. Wherever beginning happens, there is all always ending. Whenever ending begins, there's always a beginning.

When you graduate, what do you call that? Commencement. You graduate, you're finished school, but you commence, you begin something new. So we have to reflect on old and the new. When we look at our old life, as we look back, there are things that we regret. The longer you live, the more things that you regret, actually and unfortunately. There are more things to celebrate too, but also there are more things to regret. Our life is, mixed with all kinds of emotion, both joy and sadness. Exuberant joy but at the same time we have baggage with us. We said what we should not have said and we did what we should not have done. We are sometimes blinded our own foolishness. Why was I so foolish? What was I thinking?

It was almost like I wasn't thinking at all. I just lived my life by the passion or emotion that I had within me when I was younger. So when I look back, I think "what was I doing? What was I thinking?" So sometimes we are completely blinded by our own foolishness.

Breaking Free of Regrets

You know, if we could go back, create a time machine, and if you could go back I'd like to fix it, but thing is we cannot. That's why, all of us, we live with regret, guilt and burden. These things are always with us. It's just a part of us ingrained within us. Regret, guilt a burden, no one lives free from those. We all live with those things, but one thing bad about those things is sometimes these things hold us back and do not let us go forward. It's like dead weight. We all have regrets and guilt and burdens, but these things hold us back so we can never start a new life. You can never start a new beginning because these are within us. Sometimes we even feel stuck and we become victims of our past. Too much pain and too much disappointment. Sometimes I discover people, they don't change at all. It's not because they don't want to change because they cannot change. This baggage of the old is too strong. You're stronger than that.

But sometimes we feel weak because this baggage is so weighty that we cannot really make changes. You can be exactly the same old person. Our thinking doesn't change. Our habits don't change and how we feel about life doesn't change. We're just repeating the same thing over and over again with the same feeling. You're better than that. We are more than that. You're stronger than that. Just living like that. To begin a new life, we have to break away, break away from what? Break away from the old self that

enslaves me with apathy, fear, helplessness and hopelessness. Unless we break away from those things, we can never start a new beginning. In other words, you gotta have the courage to be able to let go of our old pattern of life

Just because we have lived in a certain way all of this time. That doesn't mean necessarily that that is a right way or the absolute way that we have to follow. Just because you have lived like this, that doesn't mean that you have to live like that, in the next decade or two decades. You can start new. If we blindly follow the old way— I saw three reasons why we follow the old way. One is laziness, the other is fear. And third is weakness. I mean, laziness. We're just, everything's a bother. I don't want to do anything new. You're too lazy to think about new things because you're comfortable. And also fear: there's always new things that are threatening and it's scary. You know, things are much better when we know what to do. They are much more comfortable and much more convenient because we know exactly what to do. Or weakness; many times we feel powerlessness. We feel powerless to change anything or sometimes change seems like an illusion. Oh no, no, we can't change. We think that nothing will change and we feel powerlessness and helplessness. We are stuck in this pattern of life and will die in this pattern of life. It is our weakness speaking if we blindly follow the old way because of our laziness, because of our fear and because of our weaknesses, we cannot make a new beginning.

Courage to Start a New Beginning

I do believe that every morning is a new day and new beginning. I do believe that we can always start a new beginning. That's my philosophy. It is human courage to break away, break ourselves away from the chain of the vicious cycle of the old pattern that sucks the life out of us. I do believe that we have that courage —we should have that courage. That was what Jesus wanted to do. He came to start a new beginning. This why old people are very, very smart and wise. Are they count the years starting from Jesus. So to this year is 2016 the year from the beginning of Jesus. Why? Because Jesus came to start a new beginning. That's what Jesus Christ came to do. He wanted to start a new beginning. This is what St Paul said, let us carefully read this, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Everything old has passed away. See, everything has become new".

Renew Your Spirit

This is what St Paul said. “In Christ everything has become new. Do you believe that you can have a new beginning? Yes, we can have a new beginning. The age doesn’t matter. Age is just an illusion. I do believe age is an illusion. You can always start a new beginning. That’s what I believe. Not because of me, but because I’m Christian. That’s why I believe that everyone can start a new beginning because I’m a Christian. When I look at myself, sometimes I wonder whether I can ever have a new beginning, but in Christ everything has become new, so I do believe. The new beginning, my friends starts from here. Nowhere else do beginning starts from within. Not changing our circumstances necessarily. From here, our thinking has to change. Our minds have to change. That’s why I St Paul said, “be renewed in the spirit of your minds”. He was wise. Your minds have to change first. You know, old people don’t change much so don’t be like old people you know. They don’t want to change. Be young, it doesn’t matter the age. Be young, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds. There has to be change in your thinking and unfortunately my friends, I’m so sad when I look at so many people’s minds. Their minds are polluted, their minds poisoned somehow. Polluted and posing with what? With the thinking that a new beginning is not possible. I will never change that kind of thinking. Pollutes your minds and poisons your mind.

These are the words of who? These are the words of victims of the past. The victims of the pastor always said, ‘we can never change it. It’s too late’. All the victims of the past always say that. Don’t ever listen to that. Don’t ever listen to that philosophy. Don’t ever that message. Listen to the message of Jesus Christ. Listen to the message of St Paul. “In Christ we are a new creation. The old has passed away. The new has come”. How clear can Paul get about life? I do believe St Paul, I do believe Jesus. I don’t believe people’s victimized philosophy. Don’t let them poison your minds, but be renewed by the teaching of Jesus Christ who wants to always give us a new beginning. The problem is the message is not just out there. Sometimes the message is within us, because we have an old damage itself within us. This old damaged self within us tells us whenever we tried to start a new beginning, “Who do you think you are?” It always ridicules us. “Who do you think you are?” Whenever you start a new beginning, you hear that question, but next time when you hear that question, answer it with this. “I am the beloved precious child of God. I’m a beloved son and daughter of God”. So next time you hear that question,

answer it with that answer. Of course you cannot do it alone. You need God's help. Everyone needs God's help. The spirit will help you. You are much more than you think. You know. Scotia Bank commercial says you're richer than you think. I always liked that, so I watched that commercial very carefully.

What Defines You

I think you are more than you are. Think about it. You have lived only a certain part of your life. There's a bigger part of your life you have not lived yet, but because of your damaged yourself, you're just you're stuck there. Instead of just living out your old pattern, explore the new things within you. That's a new beginning. You have not known— you don't know everything about life. You are more than you think you are. Explore it, and once you find it, start new. Life has got to go forward, not backward or stop. Fish, if they stop, what do they do? They die. They have to swim all the time to survive, to live. If you stop where you are, then you die. You have to always start a new beginning. You can do that at any age.

What defined Moses' life? What age defined Moses' life? For the first forty years, he lived in a Palace, nice luxury and everything, but that didn't define Moses. The next 40 years he was in the green pasture. He had wives and the good houses and all that. It was comfortable, very comfortable for 40 years, but that didn't define Moses and last 40 years, God called him. 'Go into the wilderness, start a new journey. You will take these people out of Egypt into the promised land'. Then last 40 years when he was 80 years old, last 40 years of his life, defined who Moses was. What defines you? You are not finished yet. Explore, have courage, be strong. Don't be wimpy, don't be wishy washy. Stand strong. Stand tall and take the challenge instead living like a victim of the past. All the university students remember this message when you enter into new journey of your life.

SEARCHING FOR THE WILL OF GOD

October 2, 2016

Romans 12:1-2

Lifestyle

Today I'm going to talk about the lifestyle, lifestyle of seeking God's will. I think that's a lifestyle, you know, knowing God's will is not really specifically; what do I eat today or what do I wear? It's not like that. It is a lifestyle about continuously – every day, every moment – your lifestyle is seeking God's will. That's what Christian lifestyle is all about. Christian life is not just what to do, what not to do. Not only that, but a general Christian lifestyle is about; "What is the will of God for me?" So daily you're searching for the will of God. To me, the most beautiful image of a human being, any human being, is the image of a person praying to God, struggling to search for the will of God. I found this image there, a person praying to God, asking God to show or reveal to me the will of God.

In that sense, the image of Jesus prayer in Gethsemane is to me, the most beautiful image of any human being. Jesus was praying and struggling hard to ultimately search for the will, the will of God, not his own will. That is the most beautiful image that I can think of. But it's not just Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane. What is beautiful about Jesus is that throughout his life all he did was really search for the will of God. You know, what impressed me about Jesus is not that he was so wise and smart and powerful and performed a lot of miracles and ultimately sacrificed and suffered and died... it's not really that. What really impresses me about Jesus was that all his life he was searching for the will of God. And that is the most beautiful thing, the most beautiful lifestyle I can think of.

Today's World

In modern days, for many of us, searching for the will of God is a foreign concept. We don't do that anymore. And also, sometimes it is an uncomfortable concept, because many people did horrible things in the name of the will of God. Even now, there are people who are doing horrible things saying that, "oh, this is the will of God. God told me to do this." And so that's why the name, the will of God, got a bad name. We don't even

search for the will, and we don't even know the will of God. So it's hard to really talk about the will of God in that way. Many of us gave up living out the will of God. We gave up searching for the will of God. "I'll do my best with my life, with my morality, with my best effort, I'll work hard, I'll take care of my family. I'll do good, try to do good things as much as possible... But the will of God? I'm not sure. I don't know. First of all, it's hard to find out what's the will of God, and I just don't know how to go about doing that." So a lot of us just gave up a the will of God. But you know, Christian life, the will of God is the ultimate purpose and ultimate goal of human life. Ultimately, if it's not the will of God, what kind of life is that? We're believers. We do believe that God exists and if God exists, God has something to do with this world, and God has something to do with me, and God must have some kind of will for this world, or for me. So if we don't really seek the will of God, what is that life? What is that Christian life? All of us, we wonder. So the will of God is the most important ultimate goal of life but in modern days, people don't care about the will of God. Very sad in a way. Very sad. As I was preparing this message, I was even asking myself, "Will people care about the will of God?" That constantly kept coming to me. "Will people care about the will of God? Then what will I say to them?" In modern society, in the modern world, the will of God has become a very foreign concept.

In today's scripture passages, St. Paul said, "So that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Hear the words, "so that". "So that" means 'ultimately'. You do all these things so that, ultimately, you may be able to find the will of God.

The Will Of God

That was like Paul's life. Ultimately he was searching for the will of God. He didn't just live a good life, he was searching for the will of God. His life was not to actualize his potential to the maximum. It was not to become a good example to other people. Paul's ultimate goal of life was to understand the will of God and live accordingly. That should be what we need to seek every day, the will of God, because that matters. There are things that matter in life and there are things that do not matter that much. The will of God is one of those things that matter a lot, and everything is a means by which you find the will of God. So in life we have to understand the difference between the goal and means by which you achieve the goal. If you get confused with goals and means, your life becomes ruined. If means

becomes goal, then your life becomes ruined. We make money but that's a means, by which ultimately we may find and search for the will of God. That is the goal. There are means by which we achieve the goal, and making money itself cannot be the goal. Becoming a great person cannot be the goal. Or just taking care of family cannot just be the goal. Those are means by which ultimately we search for the will of God, and that is the goal of our life.

When God first came to Moses, "Moses, you go. My people are suffering in Egypt. Go and free them." And Moses said, "Lord, God, I can't do it. I'm very, very comfortable here. You know, I have wife and a family and, oh, this life is really, really good. I'm 80 years old, I just want to stay here and finish my life peacefully. And also I cannot even speak well. I'm not eloquent. Can you send somebody else? I think they will fit better. They'll do a better job than me." But ultimately at the end, Moses found the will of God and he went. I thank God that Moses understood the will of God. Without, Moses, God's history would not have continued, and we thank Moses for taking the will of God seriously.

Jesus could have lived comfortably as a nice guy. If he didn't really care about God's will, then there is no cross, my friend. If he did not take God's will sincerely and live out the will of God, we don't have the cross. We don't have salvation. We thank Jesus and all others who lived a life of searching for the will of God in human history. They're great people, great people who were looking for the will of God and lived out the will of God, and they made a dent in the universe. They made a difference in the world.

Search, Seek, Find

My high school friends, from when you're young, search for the will of God. I wish, I pray that from this church we may produce those great people who make a difference in the world. When you find the will of God, I believe that we can do that. The will of God, you cannot just find it just like that. You continuously search for the will of God and then slowly and slowly you become formed in a certain way, and then you realize when you look back, "Oh, that was the will of God." It's not like, "Oh, this is the will of God, do this." But as you try to really put your life according to the will of God, then your life flows in a certain way, guided by the will of God, and when you look back, you realize that, "Oh, that was the will of God." And you will do

tremendous good to humanity. You will do tremendous good to all of the people around you. What is the will of God? Seek it. Jesus said, "If you seek it, you will find it." So what is the will of God? Seek it. Don't give up, and you will find. Knock on it. The door will open to you.

Each person has a unique will of God. I don't know what is the will of God for you. You have to find it yourself. There is something that you need to do. I cannot tell you what is the will of God for you. You have to find your own will of God. The will of God is not something that you create, or one day be like, "Oh, I'd like to do this. This must be the will of God." No, that's not how you find the will of God. You wait and wait and search and search and seek and seek, and ultimately you understand... "Ah, this is will of God." So when I look at Jesus' life and when I look at Paul... wow, they have a power of life. How do they know for sure about what they would need to do and what they want to do? That's amazing. Most people; "I don't know, I just live." That's how most people, mediocre people live. But these great people, they know what is the will of God and really have a conviction about their life. And that's what is great about these great people. So search. Seek. And you'll be able to find and understand the will of God in your life.

Your Path, Your Purpose (Is Unique)

But even though I cannot tell you what his will of God for you, I can give you two kind of helpful attitudes. That's not something that I got, it is something that Paul teaches us in today's scripture passage. First thing is, to not be conformed to this world. Do not be conformed to this world. That doesn't mean that this world is bad and there's evil and not have anything to do with this world because this world is bad. "Get away from this world and live your own life or go to the gulf or to the mountain and live your own life." That's not what he's saying. To not be conformed to this world means that you don't get immersed in this world. Don't get immersed in this world. When you're immersed in this world, you lose your spiritual sense. You're filled with this worldly thinking. You cannot have a spiritual sense. You become desensitized to God, to spirituality.

So you become desensitized, you cannot feel the spiritual guidance. And that's what happens to many, many of us. The will of God is a very foreign concept, so do not be immersed in this world. Sometimes you need to

separate yourself and be your own person. Don't be influenced by your friends. Don't be influenced by people of this world or think that this is what is life supposed to be about and that this is what life is like – do not just listen to them blindly. Think for yourself, "Is that really what God wants from your life?" It doesn't matter how many people around you do it. Hundreds of friends, they may do it, but ask yourself, "Is that really what God wants from me?" rather than blindly following them. You need to be awake and you have to know yourself, who you are and what you want, and then find your own way of living. That's the first thing. Do not be conformed to this world. Don't try to be popular. Being popular doesn't last too long. That's should not be your goal. Don't try to be popular. Find your own life. Find your own way. That is what it means not to be conformed to this world. It is about your mindset.

Second thing, St. Paul said, "Be transformed by the renewing of your minds." Transformation. How do you be transformed? I think the best way is the scripture. Scripture study. That transforms us. Scripture study, gives us critical thinking. We just started Wednesday Bible study, Women's Bible Study again. We finished the second week. I already see the difference in the second week. First week I get them together... nothing really. I mean, we haven't done it for a few months and they're just... And then second week, they're getting focused again. We are so fragile. If you don't study the scripture, it's hard to get critical thinking.

So I'm sorry, but if you're just living a religious life, coming back forth, just to church and home, there won't be much of a difference. You will be just a church person. That's fine too. That's fine with me. But finding the will of God that way, it's going to be very, very difficult. You need to be transformed by the renewing of your minds. In other words, the critical thinking has to go on in your brain every moment. Every single moment, your consciousness needs to be enriched by the word of God. The word of God is not just memorizing the scripture. It's the way you think, critical thinking, because as you study the scripture, you see how different that teaching is from the teaching of that world when it was written. They all had critical thinking.

We need to understand that to be able to discern the will of God. The will of God is not what popular people or most people follow, okay? Just because majority of the society follow a certain way, I don't believe that that is the

will of God. The will of God is not determined by the multitude. Jesus was a lonely voice. Paul was a lonely voice. That's why they were persecuted, and ultimately they were killed. But that lonely voice is a beautiful voice. That life is beautiful life, I believe. And I'd like to see that kind of real, cool people. You need to be tough in your thinking, in your mind. Searching for the will of God, living out the will of God, that's the goal. That's the most beautiful thing you can do for yourself, for your family, for the church, for the world, and for God.

CHRISTMAS – NEW POSSIBILITY

December 4, 2016

Luke 1: 26-38

Impossible becomes New Possibilities with Jesus

Whenever I read this passage, I feel bad about Mary because how difficult it must have been for the young girl. You know, I looked into the, kind of study of how old Mary might have been when she heard this news. I found out that at most she was either 14 or 15 because they got married very early during that time, around 12 to 14 months, girls get married off. And so she must have been around 14 or 15. Teenagers. How could a teenager handle such a big, huge problem? I feel so bad about Mary even even in our time. Teenage pregnancy is a social problem and the society will not accept that or take that favorably. But in Mary's time, it was not just a social problem. It was life or death problem. She could have been stoned to death for getting pregnant. That was the kind of culture that she was in.

So you can imagine the kind of burden and fear Mary must have felt, but surprisingly only 14 or 15 year old girl. She handled the situation very maturely and wisely. She didn't say much. When you look at the passage, it was mostly Gabriel. The Angel who spoke most of the time, and, Mary just said two sentences. The first sentence was, "how can this be since I'm a virgin?" The second sentence was, "here am I, servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word." Those were two words, two sentences, Mary spoke. The first sentence when you look at it clearly pointed out that this is impossible. Gabriel, she was telling Gabriel, what you're telling me is impossible. I'm a virgin. I never had a man. I never knew a man. How can I get pregnant? This is impossible. That's what Mary was saying to Gabriel. Gabriel knew, he clearly heard what Mary was saying and Gabriel knew clearly what Mary was thinking, because Mary was saying that it is impossible. Gabriel said to her, this is what he said, "for nothing will be impossible with God. Nothing will be impossible with God. "

When Gabriel said to Mary, Mary pondered thought about it took it in, and she accepted the reality, then she said the second sentence, "here am I the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word." I was pondering upon this passage. I think this, this was the message Luke

wanted to get across, through the story of Mary, Luke has something that he wanted to say to us, and that is nothing will be impossible with God. That is a message Luke wants to get across to us. Nothing will be impossible with God. Luke was saying that Mary was the first one who accepted the truth. Nothing will be impossible with God. Luke in his life, he experienced that. He saw that nothing was impossible with God. That's why he wanted to write the gospel Luke, because he experienced that nothing was impossible with God. He wanted to write that and then give it to us so that we can believe also nothing will be impossible with God. Luke was trying to say that Jesus, God became a human. That's what Luke was writing about when he was writing about Jesus. He was saying God became a human being. That's impossible.

So I mean, a teenager, who doesn't even know a man, getting pregnant. That's difficult reality, difficult fact. But God becoming a human being, that's more difficult to write about. And that's what Luke wanted to write. Mary getting pregnant and Luke writing about Jesus. These all, these are not the things that we human beings could do, these other things impossible with human beings, but Luke was saying that what he was writing about and what Mary was experiencing were mystery, were mystery. What I'm going to write about you is a mystery. I like that. I like that about life. Life is mystery, especially with God. Life is full of mystery.

New Possibility through Jesus

I like that aspect of life. The mysterious aspect of life. Life is not fixed. There's something that you don't know yet. There are many things that you don't know yet. You don't know what's going to happen to you in the future. Life is mystery in that sense. I accept that through Jesus, Luke's eyes were opened and he was able to see new possibility in life, new possibility it was Luke alone who experienced the new possibility, though all the disciples experienced new possibility in life through Jesus, when they met Jesus, what they encountered was new possibility. That's what they encountered. When they encountered Jesus,

when we encountered Jesus, when we encounter God, what we encounter is new possibility. You also encounter new disciples. Also Saint Paul experienced the new possibility, that's why he said "The Christ, the old has gone away. Behold, the new has come with God who strengthens me. I can

do all things.” That’s a new possibility. Paul saw new possibility when you read Paul’s letter, all these letters, he constantly talks about revelation. The mystery that is refilled to me. He writes the mystery. He writes about a revolution.

Always Search for New Possibility

They’re all experienced new possibility in life, not necessarily explainable or comprehensible, but new possibility. Seeing life with a new possibility that is Christmas spirit, merry Christmas. When you say merry Christmas, what you are saying is new possibility merry Christmas. New possibility for you. Jesus came to us and opened the new possibility. They saw the new possibility. That’s why they traveled great distances, for you traveling a great distance, Oh, that will be boring. Oh, they’re taking plane, or they will take 10 hours or more. For those people, great distance, meaning they were risking their lives on the way they could have been killed, robbed, they could get sick, so they are risking their lives, risking danger. They traveled long distance because they saw the new possibility. Herot also saw the new possibility and Herot did not like that. New possibility, that means there is a possibility that I may lose my power. I don’t like this new possibility. He saw the new possibility, but he didn’t like it, so he wanted to get rid of a real new possibility and killed all the children. The people who have power don’t like new possibility, they want to maintain the status quo, but people who have no power, they want new possibility in life.

Nothing is Impossible

We are faced also seemingly impossible situations in life. Sometimes we get so totally absorbed into impossible situations that our eyes become blind. We cannot see any possibility. All we see is impossibility. What Mary taught us, the little girl 14 or 15. What Mary taught us today is to let your life be in God’s hands. Then you will see something different. The song that you sang,

“Mary, Did you know that you will bear a son who walk on the water?”
Probably Mary didn’t know what was going on, but when she let her life be in God’s hands, she saw new possibility and that new possibility became reality in Jesus. Amazing. She taught us. Little girl taught us. Let your life be, let it be in God’s hands. As we wait for the Christmas, let us embrace the new possibility in our life and also let us embrace new possibility in the

world we live in. We pray for Korea. Any possibility there, but even in the midst of impossibilities let us embrace the new possibility, and I know this new possibility is not something that I can create. This new possibility is what God can give. It's not something that I can make up for all of you. The new possibilities is now what you can make new possibility is given to you by God. Embrace it. Have faith in this total nonsense of Gabriel's message. Mary saw the new possibility in this ridiculous situation. Mary held onto the new possibility, so Mary said, "here am I the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word." Last week we reflected on patience. Patience is not something you try, patience is possible because you see the new possibility in the seemingly impossible situation. Only when you can do that, patience comes

your patient because you see new possibility. My friends, what is impossible is in our eyes, in God's eyes, nothing is impossible. Only in your eyes you see impossibility, but in God's eyes, there is always possibility. Are there people in this room who are experiencing the impossibility of life right now? Are there people in this room who are surrounded by the dark cloud of doubt about life right now? Are there people in this room who are completely knocked down, because of whatever situation you may be in, do not be afraid. Maybe it is a way of God opening up the new possibility for you. Maybe it is God's message for you that it is time for you to open up to the new possibility. Mary said, here, am I the servant of the Lord? Let it be with be with me according to your word. That is so refreshing. Life is not all about grasping with our hands. Immigrant life was difficult. It was difficult for me too, university time and everything. Just so difficult. Work harder and harder, but sometimes because you work so hard, you forget the new possibilities is what God gives you, not what you make. Life is not just about grasping with your hands. Life is sometimes letting it be. Let go. Letting it be and see how it unravels before your eyes. There is a song sung by The Beatles called "Let it be", famous song. Do you know?

Let it be this song sung by The Beatles and written by Paul McCartney. In 1970 he wrote this song and just before The Beatles were broken up. Paul McCartney went through a lot of trouble in a difficult time and when he had a difficult time, one day he had a dream and his mother who died of cancer, came up in a dream and then the mother told Paul, "it will be alright, let it be" that's where he got inspiration and he wrote it. But what he wrote is exactly from the Annunciation of Mary. The passage that we read today. He

said, I'm not going to sing, but I'll read it "when I find myself in times of trouble. Mother Mary comes to me speaking words of wisdom. Let it be." That's what Mary said. "Let it be with me according to your word." Yes, sometimes maybe we find ourselves in times of trouble. There's a few verses later, he said, "and when the night is cloudy, there is still a light that shines on me. Shine until tomorrow. Let it be". Beautiful, isn't it?

If Mary did not have the wisdom of letting it be, she might've gone crazy, she would've never been able to embrace the reality that was imposed upon her. Maybe the best gift for this Christmas may not be iPad or Roomba. Whatever. Maybe the best gift, Christmas gift for you this year, maybe to have the eyes to see the new possibility, having the eyes to see the new possibility, that may be the greatest gift that we can have. No matter what situation you may be in, you should always live with new possibility. My friends don't ever forget. Doesn't matter what situation you may be always live with new possibility. That is what Christmas is all about, it's what Christmas teaches us. Open your eyes to the new possibility.

SEE! NEW CREATION!

January 1, 2017

2 Corinthians 5: 16-21

See! New Creation!

Oh, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Everything old has passed away. See everything new. Everything has become new. The old is gone. See, the new has come. I'm going to explore that a little bit today. I mean, it is exciting to have a new year it's a brand new year. Send away the old and welcome the new of all the 365 days, what better day will there be? Will it be to think about sending away the old and welcoming the new the first day? So today that is the best time for you to think about sending away the old and welcoming the new. You know, human beings are so smart.

Reorganizing for Change

I think that they are really, really smart. I mean, they created the calendar. They made new year, you know, as far as time is concerned, there is no new year. Time is just continuous flow, December 31st January first or July fifth, it doesn't matter, it's just same time, time just flows continuously. But we human beings created organized time in such a way that this is January first and this is 2017 and we are starting a new day. So I think they're very, very smart and I liked that in that way it is much easier to organize my life by having the new year we can start fresh and new. So every year you have new opportunity almost. So you, you use that, you use that opportunity every year. I think that this is a new year and then you are given a new opportunity. We can make a closure to our past 2016 and we can open the door for the new year. 2017. You know, when I was young my parents always bought clothes and shoes on December 31st and then they put on top of our bed, and the next day we could wear the new clothes and new shoes. I was so excited to, you know, wait for the next day to wear the new and new shoes and I asked my brothers and he didn't remember just vague memories, so either I liked it so much that I fantasize that I had that history or they just gave me. Sorry brother.

That's life. I mean it is a wise thing to do, to use the new year to reorganize our lives instead of treat instead of treating January first as just another ordinary day, treat it as a special day. This is a new beginning for my life. At least I want to begin the new life in 2017. What are some of things that you want to achieve? What are some of things that you want to change? What are some of things that you dream about? You have vision about? I hope that you can really expand your dreams and vision this year and you can start always, the new life. I mean resolutions. We always break within three days. We break them, but still, even though you break them, make some resolutions instead of just having another day, make some resolutions. What do you really want to do this year and then make concrete changes.

Do Not Repeat Past Mistakes

Don't just think about being a new person. To be a new person, what do you need to change? Concrete change that you have to make. Albert Einstein had a very interesting definition about insanity. He said, "Insanity. Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." That's insanity. Doing the same thing and you expect something different. I mean, I hope that this year, instead of living out the insanity, I hope that all of you make some concrete changes to something differently this year, whatever it is, and then you will see something different new year, but new year does not give you change. Automatically, new year does not make you a new person automatically. Doing exactly the same thing and expecting different results is insanity. So do something differently. Since my birthday's in January, whenever new year comes, I think about aging and these days, I realized that aging is not just getting old.

Do Not Get Old, Become Renewed

I don't even know what my age is anymore. I don't count that too many to count, but aging, I realized that it's not just getting old. Aging is being renewed. Aging is being renewed. By aging, we don't just become old, but we become renewed. I, I like to look at aging in that way. Every year I get renewed rather than getting old. And this is not what I said. This is what Saint Paul said, "Though our outer self is wasting away." In other words though, you get old, you get aged, but our inner self is being renewed day by day. Your outer self may be wasting away, but your inner self should be renewed everyday, every month, every year, since it doesn't matter the

age, whether you have this renewal within you or not, that's what's important.

Baggage of Our Past Weighs us Down

With the new year, you become one year older, but don't just get old, be renewed every year. You should be renewed, but you know, I think change is rare, I was thinking, I was reflecting. Why doesn't, why change doesn't happen, why people are the same, exactly the same. Old self, I reflected on that and realize that it is a baggage. The baggage that we have, the past old baggage that we have, that baggage weighs us down. It blinds our eyes. It blocks our site. We all have baggage and we let the baggage pull you down instead of being renewed. So this baggage just keeps us not from being changed. Therefore, because of this baggage, we cannot see beyond what we have seen. No imagination, no vision. You know when I have a conversation with people, they're smart. It's not because they're stupid, they're smart, but they can't think beyond, why? Because I realized that they have a lot of baggage within them, and so with that baggage, the vision and the way they see the world is limited in certain way. Instead of having a freedom to think about big thing, they are limited because of that bag. They cannot see beyond what they have seen. That's what I realized. Our eyes are so fixed in a certain way that we cannot see things in the new way. Spouses are just nagging nuisance always. Parents are people whom you don't, you want to leave a certain distance, not too far, not too close. Those we see each other the way we see ourselves have to change the way we see it has to change. Our understanding is very limited.

Open Your Eyes to Change

Change is not doing 'A' and then you do 'B'. That's not what change is. Change is not just doing different things. Change is, you open your eyes and now you can see something in a totally new way. That's what change is. Change is, not just doing one thing and then the next one doing something else. change is your eyes are totally open. You can embrace and you can see things in a very radical new way. That's what change is. So if that is a real change that the first thing that has to go for you is the baggage. There all kinds of baggage; Hurt, pain, insecurity, but that baggage has to go. How can we let go of our baggage though?

New Creation through Spirituality

Is it more psychological or philosophical? It is spiritual. Baggage can be let go only through forgiveness. Forgiveness is not what you do. Forgiveness is what God does. You only receive forgiveness so he's not any more psychological. You're not psyching yourself to let go of your baggage. It's not logical. It's not philosophical. It's spiritual. Only God can take away your baggage through forgiveness. That's what Saint Paul said in the scripture, "so if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. The first part, the sustinment. If anyone is in Christ, you are a new creation and the next sentence is a process. What's going on within it? How can you become a new creation?" He says, "everything old has passed away. See, everything has become new." That's a three process. Everything old has passed away, that means, your burdens are removed. Your baggage is removed. If you're in Christ, through forgiveness, that baggage is removed from you. when the baggage is removed, what happens? Your eyes are open now. That's why St Paul say, see, behold, because now now you're able to see your eyes, open. Baggage is used to blind your site and then as the biggest baggage is gone, your eyes are open. Now, see, that's what Saint Paul says,

and then third, everything new has become new. In other words, Now when you see everything, you can see it in a new way. All your past mistakes, failures, damages done to you. Your shortcomings will not be able to bind you anymore. When you are in Christ, God has forgiven you. The old is gone. Now Open your eyes. You can see it and see the world. See Yourself, see others in the new way. That is the power of forgiveness, my friends how forgiveness is possible? Only when you believe, I don't know what else.

Forgive yourself to be Renewed

When you believe that forgiveness is possible, when you see yourself, when you see baggage within you, you know what that baggage does to you? And with a sincere desire to remove those baggage. You come to God? That is repentance, and then when you believe. then God lifts up your baggage through forgiveness, so repentance and belief that desire to want that baggage to be removed, that is repentance, and now you believe, then by forgiveness becomes complete and the damage that the baggage

has done will be crucified with Jesus Christ on the cross. Only then new life is possible.

It is not psychological or logical philosophical. It is spiritual. I hope that this year, New Year, this forgiveness becomes real to all of you. I hope that you all become free from the baggage that enslaves you. Don't bring the baggage of 2016 into 2017. That's dumb. Don't do that. Start the new year with forgiveness, be forgiven. We Christians have this amazing system, that system of forgiveness. We don't just live our lives. We live our lives forgiven. If you come to God, God is willing to forgive you. When you have a sincere desire to be changed, God will forgive you and will change you. That's the power of God. That's the power of forgiveness. I don't know how else I can explain to you about forgiveness, about being forgiven. Trust. Good God, when you come to him, he will forgive you and make you free. Make you a new person. You deserve to live a good new life. 2017, maybe the year you start something new for yourself.

JOY OF ABIDING

April 30, 2017

John 15:1-11

Success Accumulated through Helping others

Good life is a fruitful life, that's what I believe that's what successful life is all about. A successful life is not how much you have accumulated, or how many achievements that you have made, that's not what success of life is. The success of life is whether you are beneficial to other people or not. Whether you are fruitful to other people. A fruit is not something that you can see on the outside. It is not quantifiable. A fruit is inequality is something within you. It's not necessarily what you do, it is more to do with you, what is inside of you, that's why Saint Paul said about fruit in this way. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

Inner Qualities within Us

So the fruit as I showed all these, it is inner quality. You cannot see it on the outside. It's not quantifiable. Generosity, kindness, love, joy, all these things are inner quality. Of course, these inner qualities manifest themselves hourly, because what's inside, cannot stay inside. What's inside, always comes out. If you have some problem inside, then it always comes out. If you're unhappy, you look unhappy, if you're not healthy inside, then you look unhealthy. So whatever is inside always comes out, uh, on the outside. So when the inner qualities come outside and manifest themselves on the outside, that's when these qualities benefit other people. It uplifts other people, it gives them hope, I believe that being able to do that, that's meaningful life when you're able to uplift or encouraged people around you, I think your life is worth living.

Try to Bear Fruit Naturally

You're not just living for yourself, you're doing all these things for other people. And that's very important for a human being to live like that. Jesus also said, "you are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. You're the light of the world, let your light shine

before others.” Jesus said, “you are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.” That means you got to be fruitful. You have to be helpful to other people. That’s what salt and light do, it enlightens other people. But one thing I realized, my friends, you cannot bear fruit by trying to bear fruit. Of course we have to try but, I realized that you cannot bear fruit by just trying to bear fruit.

Do not force Humility and Humbleness

I realized that it’s not something that you can do by trying. It’s like being humble. You cannot try to be humble, either you’re humble or not. You cannot try to be humble. You look modest and all that, but that’s not really a humility. You cannot try to be humble. Either you’re humble or not. In the same way, you cannot just bear fruit because you want to bear fruit, You try to bear fruit. Being who you are and the fruit you bear cannot be separated. Fruit is a natural result of who you are. That’s what I realized. For the tree to bear his fruit, the truth, the tree has to be faithful to his own existence. The tree does not have to try anything. It just be faithful to his own existence and then it bears fruit. When you’re faithful to your own unique existence, the fruit will come as a result of it. When the right time comes, fruit is not something that you can force to produce. Fruit is a natural result of who you are. You may not be even aware of what you’re doing. You simply did what you naturally do, but you don’t even think about it much, but other people get tremendous encouragement and hope through what you did. That’s what fruit is like. You just lived your life and yet you’ve benefited so many people around you.

Time and Effort Bears the Best Quality

You know, there is a condition that determines a good wine and not so good wine. And this condition is called terroir. In French it mean simply means: The land, but in wine, it is the condition or set of all the environmental factors, quality of the soil, the wind, the climate, the kind of effort the farmer puts in. That’s why they always put the year on the bottle, because on that year, what kind of weather, how much sunlight was there, what kind of wind, was there. Depending on, that year, even though you’re just all same Pinot Noir, depending on the one year, that is it. It can be very, very expensive. Why? It can be very cheap wine. That terrible, terrible terroir, really determines the quality of the wine. What I’m saying is you are the terrior that produces certain fruit.

The Fruit you Bear Will be Tasted by Others

If I'm not happy, the fruit that we bear may not be very good. You may do a lot of things on the surface, but the work itself is not the fruit. Two years ago, a German wings airplane crashed into a mountain. and all 150 people were killed in the airplane. You know what happened? It was not technical problem. It was not terrorist. This co pilot, he was very, very unhappy and he tried to commit suicide several times, and then while the main captain went out for washroom, he locked the door and he put the altitude to the lowest and he just waited until the plane crashed into the mountain. Just one person's unhappiness made so many people, not just 150 people who died, but their families, it's a lifetime impact on their lives, but if we are happy, humble, warm, loving, and confident, then the fruit we bear, will uplift other people in a powerful way. So instead of trying to focus on bearing the fruit, we should build, good, terrior within us. Once we establish a good terrior, than the beautiful fruits will come naturally.

Abide in Christ and you will find Joy

That's why Jesus said this. No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again, does a bad tree bear good fruit. Your existence and fruit are inseparable. They are so deeply connected for each tree is known by its own fruit, fix or not gathered from thorn, nor our grapes picked from a bramble Bush who you are and what fruit you bear cannot be separated so that terrior the producers good wine, that terrior in your life that produces beautiful fruit in your life, question is how do we cultivate? How do we build that terrior in your life? That's why Jesus said, you have to abide in me. If you don't abide in Jesus, you cannot build good terrior. You cannot build good terrior by yourself. Only in Jesus will be shaped in the most beautiful way. I do believe that as you abide in Jesus, you'll be shaped mysteriously. Even the song that we say, he will lift him, lift me up to more than I can be. He can raise me up to more than I can be.

You will Change through Jesus

You can be more than you can ever imagine as you abide in Jesus and that we didn't. Jesus, you have no choice but to change because Jesus is a changing agent, so as you abide in Jesus, and Jesus will change you, God will change you in the way that you can never expect about yourself, so when Jesus could, terrior is established so it is exciting to shape by Christ. I

don't know what I will be like in 10 years. It's not set how God will use me, how God will shape me, change me, it's a mystery, but I know that as I abide in Christ, he will shape me beautifully. Same thing as all of you. As you abide in Christ, Christ will shape you little by little. That's why Jesus said abide, me, as I abide in you, just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. If you don't abide in Jesus,

Abide in Jesus Before Everything else

you'll be as much as you try to be, but as you abide in Christ, you will be shaped in the way you can never imagine. Working hard, living hard, and devoting yourself. They're all good but not good enough. The first thing first, the first thing is to abide in Jesus and his word. Even before Jesus, all the ancestors of faith, they knew about the secret, about this wisdom. Some writer said right in the first chapter, he said, "Happy are those, their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield they are fruit in his season and their lives to now with her in order they do. They prosper in Christ and in his word we become formed." You can never force yourself to abide in Christ. Abiding in Christ means to enjoy being in Christ.

I enjoy being in Christ every moment. I enjoy abiding in Christ. Just sitting there and abiding in Christ gives us such joy, excitement, quiet time, meditation, be always mindful of Christ, studying the word. We are trying to build a reading program for our church, so weekly we're going to give you scripture and then a little bit of meditation. You can read it every day already. There's a bible study group formed, about 10, 12 people gathered together. They read Jeremiah and send emails, their reflection. In reading chapter one, what comes to your mind? What passage strikes you? They write down and they write their own reflection and send it.

You cannot Manufacture Inspiration

You know the lord's words you don't manufacture. Inspiration, you don't manufacture. If it comes, it comes. If it doesn't, it doesn't come. That is okay. Important thing is that you abide in Christ, important things, you abide in God's word as we abide in Christ, we realize that you're not alone. You are not on an island. You experience that connectedness as you abide in Christ you experienced that connectedness. Once we feel that

connectedness, we can do all things, and Jesus said, “if you have a abide in me, my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. He didn’t ask. He didn’t say, ask whatever, he asks, ask whatever you wish as you abide in Christ, what you wish changes.” It’s not money, fame, material, whatever. Those things are not important. As you abide in Christ, what you wish changes. I just want to be with you. That’s how you change as your body Christ. I just want to be with you and that will be granted. What’s your wish is simply to be shaped beautifully by Christ. You wish for a good terroir. He knew that not only you can enjoy your life, but you can make other people enjoy their lives. Is that worth living? You being the kind of person that makes other people enjoy their lives.

Naturalness bears Fruitfulness

I think that’s beautiful. Dream. Whatever you do, you make people enjoy their lives and that is possible. Only terroir within news changed and then fruit will come naturally. You don’t even have to try. Your presence becomes a blessed presence. I hope that all of you live abiding in Christ and then wait to see how God, how Christ will change you. Let us see.

FRIEND OF GOD

August 6, 2017

John 15:12-17

Many People Live With the Wrong Image of God

I think many people live with a wrong image of God, distorted image of God and this image of God is very important. What we think about God is very important. Of course, this image is not necessarily explicit image that you have. It's almost like subconscious that it is underneath. And that image is God is powerful and fearful that is image that we have, God is powerful and fearful. One of the rabbis describes about his congregation member or member of his synagogue. The girl who just went to university first year, one day she just fell and dropped dead and the school did not know how to communicate that to parents, but finally, barely. They called the parents and let them know that your daughter on the way to the class, she kind of collapsed and died.

It was too late for them to do anything. So the parents came and then they didn't know what to do. They were very disturbed. And then the next time they went to the synagogue and met with this rabbi. And the first thing that they said to the rabbi was, "rabbi at the last Yom Kippur we didn't fast." In other words, because they didn't fast. This tragedy happened. So this kind of a powerful image and fearful image of God we have and depending on what image you have about God, your life is shaped very much depending on what you think every day your life is very much shaped and then all you have is powerful image of God. But to know that God is powerful, you do not need any insight. Even Asian people, they knew that God is powerful. So they all gave sacrifice to appease God.

God is Not Just Powerful, God is Love

So then nothing bad may happen to them. So even Asian people, they knew that God was powerful. They didn't need any insight about God and people still live with that image. The powerful God image. I'm not saying that God is not powerful, but Jesus came to tell us. Something else about God. He came to show us that God is not just powerful. God is love. That's what he came to tell us. God is love for God so loved the world that he

gave his only son, Jesus Christ came to tell us to show us that God is love. This is what 1st John said, beloved, let us love one another because love is from God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God. For God is love. God does not just love. God is love. He claims that God is love and that's what Jesus Christ came to tell us. Why? Because we don't know that. I mean he had to come all the way down to us to tell us that God is love because we don't believe that we don't have that image within us.

Jesus wanted to restore that understanding of God because we humans beings don't live with that understanding that God is love. Subconsciously the only image that we have is that God is powerful and scary. This is what Jesus said today. I do not call you servants any longer because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends because I've made known to you everything that I have heard from the father that is a radical image of God, God being our friend, but come to think of it, it's not a new concept that Jesus created. God being a friend. That image is also in the Old Testament. They described the relationship between Moses and God. As friend, relationship, friendship. Exodus 30 3:11 he says, "thus the Lord used to speak to Moses, face to face as one speaks to a friend, so he already in the Old Testament, Moses and God were like friends and God called also Abraham as friends. That's how Isaiah, saw the relationship between Abraham and God. This is what Isaiah says, Isaiah 41: 8, "but you Israel, my servant Jacob, whom I have chosen the offspring of Abraham, my friend, we are God's friends. That's what Jesus said. I don't call you any longer servants. I call you my friend. The fearful God or the fearful God that we thought that fearful God came down to us to be our friend. That is a theology of incarnation that is a core of what incarnation is all about, that God far away who looks at us with fearful, scary eyes and every single move that we make and ready to make judgment upon us. We thought that that is kind of image of God, but then God came down to us and became our friend

God is Your Friend

And that is the understanding of incarnation. God is right here with us talking to us, embracing us and comforting us, but still in our mind. We put God way out there because we are too scared of thinking of God. We are too scared to have God around me. We feel that we are too dirty to have God near me, so as far as possible, I want to get away from God. But when

you understand that God is your friend, your whole life changes. When you have this new image of God, your life changes. Your thinking changes. When God becomes our friend, you have the best friend, no other human being can provide that kind of friendship to you. All other friends are not as perfect as God is.

This is what Jesus said. “No one has greater love than this to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” That’s what Jesus did to his friends. He made us his friends and then he laid down his life for us. Do you have that kind of friend? I don’t have the friend who laid down his life for you. That’s the best friend you can ever have. To most of us friends are just friends whom you play with. When you have a hard time, when you go through difficulties and troubles and pain and suffering, they will not last too long, very long. They’ll be there for awhile, but they cannot be with you forever. And they will not lay down their lives for you.

God Chose You as Friends of God

If you have that kind of friend, you’re a lucky one. The wonderful thing about this friendship is that I didn’t choose it. God chose us. John 15, 16 said, you did not choose me, but I chose you. You don’t need to have the fear of rejection because God chose us. Jesus chose prostitutes, tax collectors and sinners. We don’t usually choose those people as friends, but Jesus chose them as friends, not because they’re worthy, but because they need friends. They were the social outcast. Nobody wanted to be friends with them. Nobody wanted to be around them so they had no friends in a way that’s why they needed friends Jesus chose them to be friends because they needed friends. That’s how Jesus understands friendship, to be. For us, friends are those who are like me, who can play with me. You may feel you’re not worthy. You may not be that popular. You may not have that charisma to draw people. You may not have attractive qualities but God chose you as friends of God. Rejection hurts, betrayal hurts. Jesus received rejection and betrayal from his friends, but he never rejected them and Jesus never rejects us.

When you start seeing God not as a scary powerful being out there, but as friend, something changes within you, that you will get to know God so intimately, unless God becomes your friend, you cannot know God. You’ll have a lot of concepts of God, but you cannot really intimately understand

and know God only when God becomes your friend, you can get to know God very intimately. Jesus said, this is what you just said. "I do not call you servants any longer because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I called you friends because I have made known to you everything that I've heard from my father. So when you have that intimate relationship with God, you get to know God very intimately and that's how your existence become fruitful. As you get to know God intimately, your existence becomes fruitful. In John 15, 16, Jesus said, "and I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last so that the father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. The father will give you whatever you do, you ask in Jesus' name," and that gives me confidence. Whatever I ask God, God will give me. That gives me tremendous confidence. God will give you what you're asking for and then you will have that confidence in life

Knowing God is Your Friend Liberates You

And you will love being alone with God, God becomes your most intimate friends. You can say almost anything you want and you need and you're not scared of being lonely. You are not scared of being alone because you are alone with God. Walk with God you talk with God. You laugh with God. You cry with God. God becomes your best friend. Knowing God, knowing that God is your friend is the most liberating experience you can ever have and you'll be free from fear. That's why Jesus said love casts out fear. At the end of today's scripture, Jesus said, "I'm giving you these commands so that you may love one another as God is a friend to us, be friends to each other. That's what community is all about. Be a friend. Be a friend to each other. Be Nice to each other, be kind to each other. If you can show your love to each other, being a friend to another human being, that's the best thing you can do while you live. Be a friend to each other.

COMPLAINTS GET US NOWHERE

September 17, 2017

Numbers 21: 4-9

Do Not Complain

I generally don't like complaints. I always believed that complaints are what weak people do. Strong people don't complain. I like to think about solutions rather than complaining about my problems and situations. If I cannot fix my problems, I just have to accept them and live with them rather than complaining about them. I don't like to complain about things. Until I see that a problem can be fixed and it can be solved or when I see that is impossible to do so, I don't see it anymore because that becomes a complaint. I just live with it. I just accept it rather than trying to change it.

The Israelites' Complaints

I don't think God likes complainers either. The biggest problem of the Israelites, in the wilderness was their complaints. They constantly complained about everything. One after another. When they faced the Red Sea in front of them, they thought that they would die. Who would see any solution there? So when they saw the Red Sea, this is what they said: "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, "Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians"? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." (Exodus 14: 11-12). I mean they knew that there was no solution. They knew the Moses could not do anything about it, but they complained. Then God opened the water and let them go through.

Then in the wilderness, they didn't have food. Now this is what they said. "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." (Exodus 16:3). Again, complaint. They experienced the Red Sea, but a smaller problem occurred and they complained not only twice, but whenever they had problems. Their way of dealing with their problems was complaining and in

today's these scripture, we hear their last complaints. The people spoke against God and against Moses. "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness for there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food" (Numbers 21:5). The last sentence, 'we detest this miserable food'. What is that? This miserable food. That miserable food is mana. It was God's Grace. God rained down mana because they were complaining about food—that they had nothing to eat. Eating the same food every day, they got sick of it. It's kind of understandable. You don't want to eat the same food twice in a day. If you have a sandwich for lunch, you don't want a sandwich for dinner. You want to have jjajangmyun or jjampong or something else, but they ate this miserable food for how many years? Morning, lunch, dinner. They just ate this thing. When I went to South Africa, their meal was congee in the mornings. Oh, that's not bad. Lunch, a little thicker. Dinner, same thing, but little with a little of piece of the sardine and then this morning, again. The same food every day. So I was kind of sick of it. It's understandable eating manna everyday for how many years. But my friends, this is a wilderness. Think about it, what could Moses do? Could he make any other food? Did he have any solution? Didn't they know that there was absolutely nothing Moses could do? Be reasonable! But they complained. Sometimes complaining is not reasonable. It's a habit. It is a spiritual habit.

Complaining is a Spiritual Habit

Complaints get us nowhere. That's what I learned. Complaints get us nowhere. Be careful. Complaints can be habitual and not a very good habit. Don't take that habit. Complaints can also bring disaster to us. That was what happened. So many people got bitten by a poisonous snakes. The complaints about food immediately disappeared because they had a bigger problem. Because of poisonous snakes, they were about to about to perish. When we complain about small problems, we may sometimes face bigger problems, so be careful.

I think there's a difference between complaints and critical thinking. Complaints come out of emotional explosion. Critical thinking comes from deep, careful thinking. Complaints are spontaneous reactions, but critical thinking is for the future. Complaints come from self centered thinking and are therefore very subjective. Critical thinking considers everything and therefore there is a good balance between subjective and objective thinking. Complaints always make scapegoats and target them. In today's

scripture, the Israelites scapegoated Moses and even God. Critical thinking involves oneself in his critique. Complaints bring misunderstanding and division. Critical thinking brings understanding and unity. Complaints destroy the community. Critical thinking leads the community for the better future. Critical thinking is a good thing. I don't like complaints, but I appreciate critical thinking.

God, and Only God has Power

The Israelites repented, and came to Moses for help. This was what they said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us" (Numbers 21:7). So Moses prayed for the people. In his prayer he got this message; God told him to make a serpent of bronze and put it on a pole and let people look at the serpent and they'll be healed. The serpent was their problem. Poisonous snakes were their problem. God told them to gaze on their problems. Don't be scared. Don't run away from your problems, look at your problems, but remember, it is God who will help you with your problems. Looking at the serpent was nothing. God didn't tell them to find some kind of herbs and then put it on your wound and whatever. No, just look at the serpents, but remember, it is God who will heal you. It is the Lord your God who will save you. Jesus used this example in this teaching. This was what Jesus said, and just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lifted up. Jesus used this incident to talk about Jesus. A Roman Centurion just looked at the cross and saw Jesus and he was healed. He was able to confess that truly this was the son of God. He did nothing to understand that he just looked and understood that that was the Son of God. Salvation is not something I do. Salvation is what God does. It is God's grace. Don't create self salvation for yourself. You can never save yourself, even with your religiosity. You cannot save yourself.

I cannot create salvation for myself. God made salvation possible. Instead of complaining, the Israelites should have trusted God. God would have taken care of their needs. Don't be slaves to your complaints, but look to God and be free from the lifestyle of complaints. If you don't do that, your life will be constantly complaining one thing after another and your life will not be there anymore. You're not going to be a happy person. You'll be a very miserable person by doing that, by keep on doing that. There's an interesting story about this later in the scripture. It is from 2 Kings 18:4. It is about king Hezekiah. "He removed the high places, broke down the pillars,

and cut down the sacred pole. He broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it; it was called Nehushtan.” (2 Kings 18:4). It’s very interesting. God told Moses to make bronze serpent and if people saw the bronze serpent and the got healed and this time Hezekiah broke down and destroyed the bronze serpent. Why in the wilderness did God want to teach the Israelites to look to God through bronze serpent? God wanted them to realize that it was God who saved them, but after many years, they made a bronze serpent and they believed that this bronze serpent had power to save them. In other words, they started worshiping this bronze serpent rather than looking to God.

Cross yourself does not have power. It is God who works behind the cross. That has power. When you look at Hollywood horror movie and then the priest comes out with a cross and then people are frightened; the cross doesn’t have power. That’s a myth. That’s a superstition. It is God who works behind the cross. The bronze serpent only pointed to the living God who saved them. It’s like I explained a few times here. It’s like that finger that points to the moon. What is important is the moon, not the fingers by looking at fingers, you can never see the moon. You have to see what the fingers point to.

Look to God

They just looked at the bronze serpent, but the serpent does not have power. God behind the bronze serpent does. Church itself does not have power. ‘Just coming to the church, you will become better.’ No, you won’t. You won’t be saved by coming to church if you don’t meet God personally in your life, there is no salvation in that. Just becoming a member of St Timothy or any church will not give you salvation. You have to meet God personally and look to God then salvation is possible. Legalism is only to see the law without God. Activism is to only see our action without God. Pietism is only to see your own belief without God. Fanaticism is to see only your own personal spiritual experiences without God. Asceticism is to see only discipline without God. Traditionalism is to see only the tradition without God. What is important is to meet God. When we truly meet God, everything changes. We will experience true healing, freedom and liberation. Look to God. Your complaints will disappear. Your complaints, my friends, have no basis, no ground. It is you. Don’t think that you have valid reason to complain many times. It is you. It is your spiritual problem.

We complain because we are scared. Don't be scared. Look to God. You can deal with your problems.

IMITATORS OF GOD

October 29, 2017

Ephesians 5:1-2

God's Image

When we understand that we are created in God's image, the way we treat each other changes. We'll treat others with respect and affirm their dignity with our mouth, with our behavior, with our attitude. We treat each person with dignity. That's what we do. Jesus came to this world to restore the image of God in each person, that's what Jesus came to do. Saint Paul told us to be the imitators of God. In other words, being imitators of God, meaning find God's image within us. You have to know that you have God's image within you. As beloved children of God, Saint Paul told us to be imitators of God. As we accept that we are God's beloved children, our Imago Dei is restored within us. When we deeply experience God's love within us, then we can see the beautiful image of God within us. Then self respect will be restored and this is the very basic thing that the Bible teaches us. Let me say one thing very important for you to remember this morning or this afternoon. We do not have dignity because I am useful, we have dignity because we have God's image within us. We don't have dignity just because we are useful. We have dignity because we have God's image within us. This is a very important statement. We need to affirm this because this is not affirmed in the world we live in. We give dignity to the people who are useful, but we don't affirm the dignity for the people who we think are not that useful.

Finding the Imago Dei Within One

When Jesus came to this world, he saw that the useless people were treated badly. These useless people, they said not only are they useless, but they are sinners. They said they were dehumanized. They were labelled as sinners simply because they were useless in their eyes. The lepers, the lame, the blind. All of these people were considered as sinners. When you read the Acts of the Apostles, Peter and John went to the temple and when they were about to enter into the temple at the gate, there was a lame sitting down asking for money, begging for money, and Peter and John said this, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk" and this lame was

able to stand up and walk. Do you know where he went? First? After he was healed?, he was leaping for joy and entered into the temple. Why? Because he was sitting in front of the temple, but he could not enter into the temple because they said “you are a sinner”. He could not even approach God because they considered them totally useless. They ignored and disrespected the useless people. They saw them as a waste, waste for the society, but Jesus was different. Jesus saw Imago Dei within them, not because they were useful, but because Jesus saw the imago Dei within them. Jesus honoured their dignity.

The Church Today

Today is the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and it is also the 21st anniversary of our church. Our church anniversary always falls on the Reformation day, so it has some significance and meaning for this church. On October 31st 1517, the reformer, Martin Luther started the Reformation. He saw the corruption and the exploitation of the Church. The Church had lots of power, but with that power, they took away the rights of the people. Each person’s dignity was not respected. He saw that the church was just an institution and each person was simply used to strengthen the institution. They didn’t know that the people, were the Church. The church did not see each person with a beautiful image of God. Now, 500 years later, we need to restore our church. We need to have reformation for the reformed churches, Protestant. Restoring church means each person’s dignity should be restored. I see a lot of churches just using people as a tool to make the church bigger and bigger. All the mega churches movement, we don’t see Imago Dei in each person. They don’t treat them in that way. When we have the Imago Dei restored within us, we can see the beautiful image of God in other people. Then we can treat each other as though we treat God. The way we treat each other should be changed, just because I have the power, just because I’m smart, we cannot treat those who don’t have the power and intelligence and capability with content. That is not the right thing to do. Yes, we need power to maintain the society. We need power to protect ourselves from chaos and disorder. We need power to control those who abuse the power. We need power to coexist, but this power can not be abused. To take away the image of God in people and dehumanize them. We fight in every way against this kind of attitude because it is against the spirit of Imago Dei. It’s against our belief.

Our World

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

Restoring Imago Dei

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

BE PATIENT

November 26, 2017

James 5:7-11

Difficulty of Patience

It's easy to talk about being patient, but it is very hard to practice it. We know very well that nothing in the world can be mastered without patience. Nothing can be done easily to achieve anything good. We go through many hardships and pain and difficulties and also we experienced a lot of failures. Only after many failures, we achieved a little bit of what we really want to achieve, but just a fraction of it. But even to achieve that, it takes so much patience, much failures, and hardships. So, this is a painful process to master. And that's why we need a patience. There is used to be a very interesting visa commercial. I don't see that anymore. A father is watching a son playing with this board and then the boy writes something and then he shakes it and then the letter is gone and he writes again.

I don't know what it's called, that little tablet. You write something and then shake it and gone and writes again. And the father goes to his refrigerator and then he sees his bill statement and he takes it and he shakes it and everything becomes a zero and the commercial said, "if life is like that, you don't need a visa, but for everything else you need a visa." I mean, how nice, if our life is that easy as portrayed in the commercial but when I really think about it, I might get boring. If life is like that, if I can get anything I want immediately then I'll get bored. Life is challenging because there are things in life we can never master. If there were a pen that produces a sermon just like that, whenever I use it, sermon just comes out.

Doesn't matter how much thousand, \$10,000. I'll buy it. Life would be so much easier that way. But, come to think of it, if I have that pen, my life may be quite boring. The challenge we need these challenges, these challenges give us something to work for and something to pursue. That's what makes our life exciting. There's something that you cannot just master, something that you cannot just achieve. That's why you're working so hard, but still, you don't get it, and that process itself gives us a little bit of meaning in life. Spiritual life is more exciting because it is hard to master because it's challenging. Spiritual life is very challenging and it's hard to

master. Maybe there's is no such thing as mastering spiritual life. That's why spiritual life is so exciting. Spirituality always takes us beyond our comfort zone.

Cultivating a Spiritual Life

Spirituality takes us always beyond what we can do easily. So it is very important to be patient in cultivating a spiritual life. Like the farmer who patiently waits for the rain to fall after they planted the seeds. We have to learn to patiently wait for the spiritual change after we put so much effort into it. Israelites had to learn this patience, in the wilderness for 40 years. Maybe that's why God left them there to teach them what patience is all about. For 40 years they have to wait. And early Christians, because of their persecution, they experienced tremendous persecution in the beginning and they had to wait. They always called Maranatha, "come Lord." That's what it means. And they waited and persevered through all that persecution. I mean, it's not that it wasn't their choice. Their environment kind of demanded that from them.

Almost a forced them to be patient. Sometimes you cannot choose our situation, our environment, our life circumstances and just forces us or demand us just to be patient. And the early Christians because they experienced a tremendous persecution, probably they built a muscle, spiritual muscle, muscle of faith. Maybe that's why we still have Christianity after 2000 years later, if the Christianity was established very easily in the beginning, probably we may not even have Christianity now, but right in the beginning, they went through so much persecution and hardship. They build a strong spirituality in the process. So there is a blessing in disguise. It is hard to take him when he comes, but once you go through it, you become stronger. So it is a blessing in disguise. We may prefer an easy and comfortable life but who doesn't? But let me tell you, be careful. When your life is too easy and too comfortable, I'll tell you to be careful because you may lose your purpose of living.

You may lose life itself. You may wonder if this is all about life. Just eating well and living well is that it? Sometimes you may get totally disappointed and disillusioned about your life. Faith grows on suffering and struggle. The best food for faith is struggle and suffering. People want to grow fast and when they want to grow fast, hardships, struggle, and suffering seem like

the only hindrance. That slows down your growth, but let me tell you, if you change fast, you change fast. But if you change something, you're back to zero fast. Nothing changes fast. Real change takes time. Real growth happens one step at a time.

Make it a Habit

I believe in the power of doing little things every day. I think that it has tremendous power. If you can do something every day I believe you will see the power of that little thing that you do every day. Ancient Roman poet, Ovid said dripping water hollows out the stone, not through force, both through persistence. Even water can make a hole in the rock when it comes down continuously. Chinese has a word for that too, so I memorized, but I forgot now, sorry. I said it in KSM service and they were like, "wow! How did you know?" Of course, Google. You can get anything from Google except sermon. You know, faith is very simple.

I believe that faith is a good habit. That's what faith is. Good habit. Faith doesn't happen overnight. You can never have faith if you don't have a habit. If you don't have a spiritual habit, doesn't matter how long you been to church, you can never have faith. Faith is a good habit, and many years of spiritual practices produce faith as a result. And having a habit is very powerful. You don't become an alcoholic by one binge drinking, but if you repeat heavy drinking every day, every night, it becomes a habit. And the habit controls you. A good habit is also very powerful. You know, Stephen King who write mostly horror books. I don't read these books much, but one book that he wrote is a just beautiful book, made into a movie, Shawshank Redemption. I'm sure some of you have watched that movie, beautiful movie if you didn't watch it. Stephen King wrote that book and he said, he writes every day, not a single day. He misses. He writes every day, including his birthday and holidays. He has a quota every day, 2000 words until he writes 2000 words he doesn't stop his pen. He writes every day.

Mark Twain said the same thing. The good habit makes a good writer. Being patient doesn't mean that you don't do anything and just wait. Being patient is you're doing something believing that you're doing something worth worthwhile and you believe that someday that will bring the result. So you patiently keep doing it. That's what waiting is. Waiting is not just sitting down doing nothing. Waiting is you wait for the result because you believe

that this is good and you wait for the result and continue to little thing over and over and over again, even though you don't see the result right away. That's what waiting is. If there's one thing that you want to do in your life, put that in your daily schedule. Just don't say that I want it. If you really want it, put that in your daily schedule. Anger is a problem. You really want to be free from the anger. Put that in the daily schedule. A complaint is a problem. Then put that in the daily schedule. For example, write a Thanksgiving journal every day. Okay. From today I'm going to write five items that I'm thankful for. Every day you write down why you're thankful for. You keep doing that and your complaint will disappear. Someday, you'll be a thankful person. Today's the last Sunday of November already and next Sunday will enter into the last month of this year and then from January you'll have a new resolution. But start now, from January to late. Think about what you want to achieve in 2018 and prepare yourself from now and start it. And then if you're a success this year in 2018, the next year, 2019 add another habit. So every year add one habit at a time, what you want to do, what is really important to you. Do that and your life will change.

Reflection

I really enjoy TBS, Tuesday Bible study, and they are writing these days. What we do is different from other Bible Studies. One week I go and teach and then a week after they gather together with the computer, they sit down and they actually write about their life from what they studied. For example, Job first chapter about running away. And then next week they come together and they write about their life of running away. In the beginning, you know, they are like I don't like to do it but now, after four weeks, my goodness, the depth of their writing. They're going to be all writers. It's a really deep and very interesting as they study. Habits are scary. You can build good habits, good spiritual habit, and your life much more enjoyable and joyful.

A NEW TEACHING

January 28, 2018

Mark 1:21-28

Jesus' Teaching

Today we're going to reflect on Jesus' Ministry. This is the first thing Jesus did after baptism and calling the disciples and all that. Jesus did all that before he started ministry, and as he started this ministry, the scripture that we read today was the first thing Jesus did, and the first thing he taught in the synagogue. That was the first time people met this person.

When they first met Jesus they listened to His teaching, and this was their response; they were astounded at his teaching for he taught them as one having authority, not as the scribes. They immediately realized that Jesus' teaching was different from any other kind of teaching that they used to know, like teaching of scribes, teaching of scholars or any kinds of teaching. Jesus' teaching was somehow very different. Jesus' teaching had authority and I'm wondering what is the difference between Jesus' teaching or any other teaching or teachings of the scribes? That's what I'd like to reflect on with you today.

In the Bible, Jesus and his word are very deeply, intimately connected, so intimately connected that John The Gospel says that Jesus is the word becoming flesh. When Jesus spoke his word in the synagogue, what happened? A synagogue is a small place. People gathered together and as Jesus was teaching, there was a man with an unclean spirit. A man with an unclean spirit. What is that? We don't usually use that kind of expression, "he's a man with an unclean spirit". It's hard to know what Mark meant, but I see an individual who was completely controlled by the power of darkness. He wasn't free. He was in deep bondage. Something outside of him controlled him. He wasn't free to be able to do whatever he wanted, some outside force controlled his thinking, his life, and he was completely abused by this external force, by this power.

Isolation of Man

When I see this man, I see loneliness, isolation, the void of life he experienced. Emptiness surrounded by absurdity, out of focus, estrangement from reality, an endless struggle. I see all these things in this man who is tortured by some kind of force outside of him, but as I look at that, I realize that's what modern people are. That's what modern people complain about. All of us. That's what we complain about. This story is not just about one man, whether he was a man with an unclean spirit or not, what we experience and what this man experienced was very similar. So this is not just a story about this poor man, this is a story about all of us. This story's about the predicament of human beings, both ancient and modern. When the word of God came to him, something wonderful happened to this man.

Jesus' Teaching

Mark said, "and the unclean spirit throwing him into the convulsions and crying with a loud voice came out of him and the unclean spirit came out of it." He was released from the power that controlled him, oppressed him, and took life out of him, and I believe that this is the difference between Jesus' teaching and any other teaching.

Jesus' teaching was to separate the darkness and drive out the darkness. That was Jesus' teaching.

The teachings of the scribes swore to accumulate knowledge for a given person. Jesus' teaching was to take out. Not to add on. That was the difference between Jesus' teaching in any other teaching. Often, we think that when you learn something, you learn new information and new things. You accumulate knowledge, you accumulate all the information in you, but Jesus' teaching was not to accumulate. Jesus' teaching was to take out what is unnecessary within us that enslaves us. That was Jesus' teaching. Two totally different directions. One is to take out, the other is to add on. Jesus did not come to this world to add more. Jesus' teaching was not about adding more information and knowledge to what was already given. They said, this is a new teaching, but in Jesus' teaching there was nothing new. Jesus only spoke about what the Old Testament already talked about. Jesus did not add any new information. Jesus always quoted and used the Old Testament. Jesus Christ came to this world not to add more, but to

drive out what bound the world. Real teaching is not about adding more knowledge and more power. Real teaching is about freeing us from things that enslave us. If you want to add more to your life, you will lose it. But if you let go of what you have already, you'll find life. That's what Jesus taught us. You want to have life, you'll lose it. You let go of your life, you'll find it. Real teaching is to help us to let go of what we hold onto without realizing how enslaving that is.

More

The most powerful culprit that enslaves us, like this man with an unclean spirit is more. More power, more money, more control, more pleasure, more me. The more you want to have it, the more you'll be enslaved. Our problem is not about having more or adding more. Now we have much more than 50 years ago. We have all the information we want at our fingertips. Within a few seconds you can find even what used to be top secret and within a few seconds, you'll get all that information as you want, but are we better? Are we freer? I see more people struggling with their life. I see more people being enslaved. I see more depression, I see more problems. I see more unhappiness. We have more and yet we are in a war situation. What kind of teaching is that? Our problem is not having more. People accumulate knowledge and they are proud of how much they have or how much they know, and yet nothing much changes in them and they know it.

No matter what I do, somehow, I don't change. I'm not really free. I'm not really happy. We know, and we have much more than what we used to, but our feeling of isolation, loneliness, abandonment, and emptiness is more severe than ever before. The answer is not in having more, but human beings keep pursuing more, somehow hoping that having more will heal us and give us freedom. Let me tell you, that's brainwashing by materialism, by modern society. You have this, you will be happier. You know this, you'll be happier. That's a lie. It's brainwashing by this culture. Having more is better. That's not how Jesus saw life. Jesus came to take things out of us rather than adding more. In the process of having more, our soul becomes totally incapacitated that our will cannot even change a small, bad habit. We don't have the power to change even a small bad habit. We're completely controlled by these things and we don't know what to do.

We have become so powerless. Jesus empowered us by taking out what is unnecessary within us. His teaching deeply penetrates into our soul and frees us from things that enslave us. Jesus sees very well how enslaved we are. Jesus sees the human condition very well. What we need is not the power to accumulate, but the power to snap us out of this deep predicament. What we need is a teaching that breaks apart the power that controls us against our will and against God.

Schizo

In Mark, a special word is used; schizo. It means to separate, split, or divide. Of course, the word schizophrenia came from there, but schizo itself is not necessarily a bad word. Schizo means it breaks apart. When Jesus was baptized, the heaven was separated, that's schizo. When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain was schizo. It was split, and that was Jesus' teaching. Jesus' teaching splits the darkness from us and drives out that darkness. As Jesus tore apart the unclean spirit from the man, Jesus came to tear apart the darkness from us. That is the power of Jesus' teaching and in that sense Jesus' teaching was very, very different from others' teaching. I saw that. In Bible Studies, at the retreat I saw the power of darkness being split and coming out of people and they experienced freedom and empowerment. New empowerment. The empowerment of not having more, but empowerment of being free.

What darkness is enslaving us? Greed? Anger? Pride and stubbornness? Petty, dirty desire? You can be free with the teaching of Jesus Christ. I believe that there's nothing in the world that can heal you. Only Jesus' teaching can heal us in a true sense.

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.

FOOLISHNESS AND GREED

March 11, 2018

Psalm 107:17-22

Becoming Fools

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

Different Kinds of Intelligence

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

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

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

Greed

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

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

greedy people? What the world would that be? But somehow God hid his power to the people who are greedy.

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

On one side of the coin you see greed, but on the flip side of the coin, what you see is fear and insecurity. You have fear to see your own emptiness, your own bankruptcy within yourself. There's nothing inside you. This fear you replace with greed having more, keeping more, being better than others. There's a fear that what if my kids fall behind? What if I'm not loved and liked by others? What if I don't make it? What if I don't have enough? All this fear, they fill it with greed, so behind the greed, I see fear, worries, mistrust of oneself, anxiety about life comparison and so on. Greed will never give us true satisfaction. Greed by nature is insatiable. We'll never understand the truth that if you lose it, you'll find it. If you'll find it, you'll lose it. That's the life truth that Jesus taught us. You try to gain it, you will lose it, but if you let go, you'll find it. That truth of life, they'll never understand what it is and they'll never be content. In other words, still never be happy. Living with greed, we can never be happy. It doesn't matter how much money you have, how big your house is, how great your car is. It doesn't matter what it is, but you will never be happy. As long as you live on greed, you replace the happiness with all these things I call that I call this stupid. St. Paul's life was very different from the life of greed. This is what he said, "not that I'm referring to being in need for. I've learned to be content. He learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little and I know what it is to have plenty in any and all circumstances. I have learned the secret of being well fed or of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need." I called that smart. I call that happy life. He's happy and he's so big that circumstances don't determine his happiness, he's so satisfied. He's so content. Doesn't matter whether he has a lot or not. I call that real smart. Greed will lead us into dissatisfaction, complaints and corruption ultimately. There's a lot of whatever is going on in Korea right now, not only North America, all the big guys are just. They are taken into prison. There are

smart people. They are smart to get to the top of the society and yet greed swallowed them up. The end is destruction.

The Psalms

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

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

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

Let us be Wise

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