



Hear the Word

from Pastor James N. McEachran



Gather... Encourage... Equip... Send...

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

July 9, 2017

Re-Member

Matthew 11:16-19; 25-30

"I will recount/remember," the psalmist penned, "the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD because of all that the LORD has done for us...has done for US."

About ten years ago, there was found in the sanctuary after worship a charm bracelet. Not just some piece of jewelry, but a precious remembrance of people, events, place visited and loved. Have hoped for years that the lost would be found. I have dropped hints once or twice in groups, even wrote about it in a VOICE. I have kept it on my desk, hoping that one day a person will get it back and remember the joy of the lost being found.

Ever forgotten something important? Could not place a name, number, or place? I am not, for the time being, thinking of the "little" things: lost phone, checkbook, charge card, favorite trinket.

I am thinking in a deeper way about the times of trial, anxiety, fear, and doubt when what is forgotten about the blessing of life, the places where God has been the meter to guide us back into the faith journey and the confident trust that God has a place, that the Lord Jesus walks with us, and the Holy Spirit empowers us to remember each day that ...

1. It is the grace and mercy of God that saves us. It was so for Israel who needed the constant reminder that in the midst of even exile, when the judgment presence of God seemed so difficult, that in re-remembering through repentance, new days dawn and the God who first named them as His own, the God who judged them and turned from them when they turned from God, is the God who would restore sound relationship through acts of mercy. Grace freely given to reset the faith and the trust that "The LORD is gracious and merciful slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." And...
2. It is the Cross of Christ that aligns us in Grace. Paul got that and tuned the trust of the Cross into the power of God to fully forgive and guide to the places the brokenness of the human heart to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Did you catch the sense of Paul? The eternal "up and down" rhythm of our lives is most often the eternal struggle once characterized by the debate of the two voices on our shoulder---one dynamic for the good (The little angel on our right shoulder.) and the not-so-good (The little devil/demon figure calling to surrender to darkness on the left one.) The struggle is always which to follow, where to surrender to the way of ease in which only I can win.)

It is here that the Cross finds us. Draws us up into the love that will never let us go. And for that reason, our of Baptismal grace, Paul draws us back to the foot of the Cross with the worlds "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" And that plunges us back into the flood waters of Baptism, where we die, that we might be raised to newness of life and to walk in Christ with one another. For we believe that...

3. It is Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who gives rest and creates a pathway to serve through Jesus Christ who in today's Gospel, gets us into mission mode as we re-member and return to the Lord our God, to the love, the Christian community of those who know that Christ died on the Cross that we might have confidence and boldness as we are faithful practitioners of the Way of Jesus Christ.

We have been in the Sundays in June recalled the key words of our Mission Statement, they are on the walls. And now we look into the urgency of the Gospel calling for each of us in the ministries we are called in the world and at Saint Andrew's.

The Gospel gets at that urgency. Jesus' mission has been full of good...words shared, teachings of renewal, acts of healing and love.

The people have had shared the ministry of John the Baptist and the Messiah HIMSELF IN PERSON. Impressive but only passive response...kinda fun to see, but no commitment that counts. Called John "fanatic" and Jesus "too common."

Jesus began to speak words of judgment to those who had seen and heard, came out to see the parade passing by, but now believe that they were seeing and hearing the last words of wisdom and life coming into the world. Great entertainment but they were looking for another, something better, new edition of grace!

To be in the presence of Jesus is one thing, but it is not salvation. Even in Jesus' mission base--- Capernaum---there was lukewarm commitment...did not take Jesus seriously, no urgency, just one more moment in a long day of one's life.

Jesus teaches: "Absolutely everything has been handed over to me by my Father; and no one really knows the Son except the Father; and no one really knows the Father except the Son and the one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." God's whole truth is found in one place, Jesus, the One who calls and sends us.

The words of Luther, speaking to his students: "Stop speculating about the Godhead and climbing into heaven to see who or what or how God is; hold on to this, to this man Jesus, he is the only God we've got."

Then, Jesus' invitation, this Good Shepherd of the sheep, of you and of me: "Come to me, here now, those who struggle and carry too much. I will refresh you. Learn from me. I am gentle, simple of heart, and will provide you refreshing and deep down souls."

Re-member me is the path of Jesus into our lives. We are not playing spiritual work-up, for spiritual reception by the One with whom we are yoked...burden shared, brings rest. And rest gifts us with serenity in life changing reconciliation and love to share.

It is here in worship that our sense of trust and commitment is renewed, leaning on the everlasting arms of Jesus and with one another.

Your bulletin cover is one more reminder of what happens when we remember those and who we are in mission. As we worship we receive our memory helper, the Gos-Pill.

Here is our launching pad under the sign of the Cross. Our commitment to Jesus renewed, our reaching out is deeper and fuller; our discipleship stronger and clear that we have the story to tell to the nations, to all.

Under the guidance of Jesus' life and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we grow and glow, glow with light and love that others might know this Jesus, the Way into the Truth that is life.

Remember your mission post? In the radius of where you live each day. To each of us is the work of the evangelist, an inviting community that others too might taste and see that the Lord is good.

May God bless you in the mission field in the new week and RE-MEMBER who you are the places of sharing and serving you are called to be in Jesus' name. Amen!