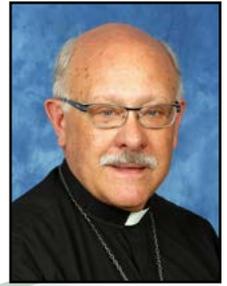




Hear the Word

from Pastor James N. McEachran



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

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

October 14, 2018

Focus on Commitment

Mark 10:17-31

You sang it ... the words have leave me hopeful, but wondering ...

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things (ALL THESE THINGS) shall be added unto you. Alleluia, alleluia.”

Ever wondered, I have wondered “What are all these things?” In what often seems an unfocused world, in time of change, and in a period of human history which seems different, difficult, and in which serenity and peace seem allusive? What does it truly mean to follow Jesus?

We are in that section of Mark’s Gospel which draws Him ever closer to Jerusalem. His words and actions seem conclusive; there are times of conflict with the religious authorities and His disciples seem to become clear about their call and His power, but they are not always “getting it.” A little like you and like me!

Crowds kept gathering about him; may have been 1000’s from the “feeding stories.” And recall, last week, they were bringing little children to him that he might bless them. There was a disciple grumble! But, Jesus lifted them up, laid hands on them, blessed them, and said, “If you don’t receive the kingdom of God as a little child, no way!”

Recall my take was that simple trust is way, to be about of life treating one another as Jesus did the children, words and actions of nurture and love.

But, wait, moving closer to Jerusalem, a man ran up to him, knelt down before him, and cut to the point: “What, good teacher, must I do to INHERIT eternal life?”

Jesus cuts to the chase: Begins by noting that ONLY God is good and points him to the old way of the Law and its just precepts.

The inquirer drops “good” and says, “Teacher, done that from my youth.” Only in Mark’s Gospel does it say that Jesus looked at him and loved him.

One thing, get rid of anything that keeps you from full commitment. In this case, assets, aka “many possessions” or those things that keep us from the level of full devotion free of the restraints of the stuff (More than \$\$) that holds on to us.

The plot thickens ... God would have all that you are, all that you have free of hindrances---time, energy, money, and voice as a sacrificial, sacramental offering to God in Christ.

Peter steps in and says, "Wait, who can be saved, we have left everything." Jesus teaches what I will name the "Full Meal Deal challenge." Or, humble discipleship, reliance upon God that provision for life includes all that God gives to us, to share, to enfold that all might know the blessings of the kingdom here and into eternal life.

For you see, God's Generosity Index, is take my life, our lives and let them be given over to God, all of us, all of me! In God's good timing that we might seek the Lord and live as our lives are offered, in great thanksgiving, to set a table that will heal the whole creation.

We are, beloved in Christ, entering into a time where we consider how we are Managing God's Gifts. Each week an insert will be shared which lifts the way that we respond to the call to be the Church in the world, a congregation in Bellevue, a regional community which lifts high the Cross of Christ as our Center.

There are those who will say commitment is waning in the church; it is not a matter of lack of but of over commitment which impacts all of us.

There are those who would say that the churches are suffering from a weakening of focus. Yet, I see time and again, faith communities who declare themselves to be full service, fully committed to grow together and to live out of the Center to fulfill the greatest of all commandment to love God and to love our neighbors.

You can't quantify that kind of discipleship; it is about men and women, boys and girls, rich and poor, for ALL to find their first focus in the commitment that frees us up to be those who keep clear confession (Jesus is Lord) witness in boldness knowing that mercy received is meant to be shared generously each day that God gives us life.

Midweek, I call on you to remember our tether to this worship ... this time in which voice and song, prayer and Holy Spirit filled us up anew. It took 53 saints to lead us in worship, to help us see God's song book as our road map back into the world.

To go, to grow, to glow with the light of the Christ who will never, ever let us go. For---

OUR HOPE IS BUILT ON NOTHING LESS
THAN JESUS' BLOOD AND RIGHTEOUSNESS;
NO MERIT OF OUR OWN WE CLAIM,
BUT WHOLLY LEAN ON JESUS NAME.
ON CHRIST, THE SOLID ROCK, WE STAND;
ALL OTHER GROUND IS SINKING SAND.

And so we are bold to say, AMEN, AMEN now and forever.