

Pastor Greg Briggs

Sunday, May 13, 2018

1. Prayer and Introduction
  - a. “May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, our rock and redeemer.” Amen. (Psalm 19:14)
  - b. **“God is the one who enables you both to want and to actually live out God’s good purposes.” V. 14**
2. Narrative lectionary text, but timely
  - a. Today’s scripture in light of what’s going on with church
  - b. Some of you are probably a bit anxious about the future path for this congregation, in light of its current financial situation
  - c. My notes, FWIW
    - i. Metaphor - Panning for Gold
    - ii. There were many good nuggets that came out in that meeting. The biggest one being the importance for people to share their stories about this congregation
    - iii. These nuggets may get overshadowed by the anxiety and worry if we don’t look for them, or ‘pan for them’
    - iv. We shouldn’t ignore the anxiety (as it is being used to motivate congregation), but channel and address it separately and Avoid letting anxiety become the focus
  - d. Important to care for one’s self in the midst of this important and difficult time of discernment
    - i. Two resources on the back of the bulletin
    - ii. Stress relief techniques – eating ice cream
    - iii. The tree of spiritual practices from a couple of weeks ago
  - e. Talk to me if you need extra help managing your anxiety and worry in this time
3. Paul reminds us the purpose of the church isn’t to care for itself
  - a. Reminder, he’s writing this while in jail
  - b. He’s not asking for a lot of attention for himself, but to “keep the eyes on the prize” instead
  - c. **“4 Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others. 5 Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus”**
4. Care for self, while focusing on others
  - a. Xity isn’t self-help – it’s end goal isn’t about making you feel better about yourself
    - i. It’s about feeling and actually BEING better by caring about other people, in honor and in following the example of Jesus
  - b. Not sacrificial atonement – Terrell
5. Persisting in the midst of anxiety
  - a. Change your metrics – not about dollars, full time vs. part time, members, attendance
  - b. How is the church adopting the attitude that was and is in Christ Jesus?
  - c. Some of the worry, or anxiety, is losing sight of what church, and this congregation is for
  - d. A ship in the harbor is safe, but that’s not what ships are designed for
6. Metrics - Church literally saves lives

- a. Show of hands, who could personally testify to this statement that “church literally saves lives?” – these are some voices and stories worth listening to
  - b. Youth
    - i. LGBT
    - ii. Bullying
    - iii. Abused
    - iv. Church isn’t about being nice, or respectability politics
      - 1. Caring for others, calling us back when we are misled,
  - c. Sanctuary churches – providing home and safety to refugees
  - d. Homelessness and food drives
  - e. Church that host AA, NA, Al Anon, and NAMI support groups
  - f. Churches that visibly demonstrate their love and beliefs, giving hope to those who need it
  - g. Churches filling the gaps in society, giving people new family, new support structures
    - i. Finances and accountability
    - ii. Learning new behaviors
  - h. Health care
  - i. Morals ethics
    - i. Quote from scientist
  - j. I’m here, as a formerly “lost soul” wouldn’t be in any other kind of church
7. Push Back
- a. Too gay of a church – save some more lives, then. It’s on you to show how this congregation is literally saving lives
  - b. Wish we didn’t have to politicize everything, just read the Bible and got back to the simple faith – you need to re-read your Bible.
  - c. Again, caring for one another is important, but it is NOT the main purpose of the church
  - d. Get a new perspective – re-start of the Poor People’s Campaign begins tomorrow. Come and join me. Sign making starts around 11, rally starts at 2.
8. **Shining like Stars in the world, surrounded by people who are crooked and corrupt**
- a. Mother’s Day – from Wikipedia
    - i. Anna Jarvis – creator of Mother’s day “Her campaign to make Mother's Day a recognized holiday in the United States began in 1905, the year her mother, Ann Reeves Jarvis, died. Ann Jarvis had been a peace activist who cared for wounded soldiers on both sides of the American Civil War, and created Mother's Day Work Clubs to address public health issues.”
    - ii. Although Jarvis was successful in founding Mother's Day, she became resentful of the [commercialization of the holiday](#). By the early 1920s, [Hallmark Cards](#) and other companies had started selling Mother's Day cards. Jarvis believed that the companies had misinterpreted and exploited the idea of Mother's Day, and that the emphasis of the holiday was on sentiment, not profit. As a result, she organized boycotts of Mother's Day, and threatened to issue [lawsuits](#) against the companies involved.
9. **Therefore, my loved ones, just as you always obey me, not just when I am present but now even more while I am away, carry out your own salvation with fear and trembling. God is the one who enables you both to want and to actually live out his good purposes. V 12-13**

## Readings

Philippians 2 Common English Bible (CEB)

Imitate Christ

2 Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort in love, any sharing in the Spirit, any sympathy, 2 complete my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, being united, and agreeing with each other. 3 Don't do anything for selfish purposes, but with humility think of others as better than yourselves. 4 Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others. 5 Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus:

6 Though he was in the form of God,  
he did not consider being equal with God something to exploit.

7 But he emptied himself  
by taking the form of a slave  
and by becoming like human beings.

When he found himself in the form of a human,

8 he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death,  
even death on a cross.

9 Therefore, God highly honored him  
and gave him a name above all names,

10 so that at the name of Jesus everyone  
in heaven, on earth, and under the earth might bow

11 and every tongue confess that  
Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Therefore, my loved ones, just as you always obey me, not just when I am present but now even more while I am away, carry out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 God is the one who enables you both to want and to actually live out his good purposes. 14 Do everything without grumbling and arguing 15 so that you may be blameless and pure, innocent children of God surrounded by people who are crooked and corrupt. Among these people you shine like stars in the world 16 because you hold on to the word of life. This will allow me to say on the day of Christ that I haven't run for nothing or worked for nothing.