

Devotions – November 8-14, 2015
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Sunday, November 8, 2015
Eternal Redemption

Text: Hebrews 9: 11-12

But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place – with his own blood obtaining eternal redemption.

As a people I think we are challenged, or perhaps overwhelmed with the concept of eternal redemption. While we continually note our shortcomings, the Grace of God will always be there with His eternal redemption.

I don't know about you, but I tend to remember my personal short comings, even long after I have repented and been forgiven. Do you do this? It seems the system we are working with hears 'eternal redemption' and since every day relationships don't work that way, it's hard to accept.

But Christ isn't operating within our system. Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come and what has come is God's love in God's amazing gift of Grace.

Let us pray: *Holy God, we give you thanks and praise for the life you offer us. Help us to take in your amazing love, even when we feel unworthy and know that there is nothing we can do to make you love us less. Amen*



Monday, November 9, 2015
Renewed in God's Love

Text: John 3:17

Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 3:17 is kind of like the little brother of 3:16. Sometimes it gets left in big brother's shadow.

Who memorized John 3:16 growing up? Did you? I know I did. I think it was the first verse I memorized. I was in 2nd grade and I worked pretty hard at a VBS and received a ruler with the verse on it. I wish I still had that ruler, it would be a great keepsake. Luther said John 3:16 was the Gospel in a nutshell, and it is! But why am I talking about 3:16 if the verse listed is 3:17.

Well, 3:16 strengthens 3:17 and vice versa. We all know in 3:16 we hear of God's love and what God did for those he loves...3:17 strengthens that message in the negative, hearing what God did not do. God wants to make sure you got the message...What God did for you; what God did not do, both because God loves you.

Let us pray: *Loving God, continue to write the words of your love on our hearts, and may your word continue to be the living word within us, always affirming your love, always making us new. Amen*



Tuesday, November 10, 2015

Wearing Christ

Text: Galatians 3:27

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Do you ever think of yourself as wearing Christ? If so, how would your image of yourself change? We live in a culture that very much finds identity in what we wear. Just look around you. I'm not sure what the cool kid clothing is these days but when I was a kid it was Gap clothing. Outdoorsie folks? North Face or REI. Professor look? Suede jackets sometimes quipped with leather elbow patches. And the list goes on, finding identity through what we wear.

The book of Galatians informs us that from the moment we are baptized we have put on Christ. No matter what we wear, our primary clothing and identity is in Christ, "Marked with the Cross of Christ forever."

So next time you get dressed and you're looking in the mirror to make sure the hair is down, the collar is right and everything looks good to go for the work day, remember the most important clothing we wear, in which we truly find our identity, the clothing that brings life, love and grace. Every day we wear Christ.

Let us pray: *Gracious God, continue to remind us that you are always present with us and that in our Baptism we're dressed with the only cloths that matter concerning whose we are and in whom we are called.*



Wednesday, November 11, 2015

God's Reflectors

Text: John 1:5

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Do you remember when you were a kid and you first learned that you could take a little pocket mirror and reflect light? Sometimes reflect light off your watch! And yes if you were like me you reflected it occasionally at your little sister...oops.

Anyway, it was such a joy trying to reflect light into different areas, and where did they show up the best? In the dark of course! The dark was never a match against the light.

Well as followers of Christ we carry a reflector around with us 24/7! We are not the light, but you and I are actually reflectors ourselves! The light of Christ is with you to be a reflector and when you reflect the light of Christ into the world, the darkness is no match. And by Grace, even when some may mistakenly think the darkness has won, we're brought to life, freed from the bondage of our sin.

So continue to do just as you did when you were young, enthusiastically reflecting light, knowing that in Christ you have been given the light of life.

Let us pray: Creator God, we know that you made us in your image and we give you thanks for choosing us, giving us your light that we may reflect your love into the world. Give joyful hearts to be reflectors of your Grace. Amen



Thursday, November 12, 2015

Living in Christ as Christ Lives Through Us

Text: Galatians 2:20

...and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

When you get up in the morning do you remember? No, not your meeting you have to get to, or the presentation you have to give or by what time you have to drop the kids off...even though those are all good things to remember! But do you remember that Christ lives in you? According to Galatians, *it's not even you that lives anymore* but Christ that lives through you! Think of all the implications remembering this foundational concept could have for our lives! It completely changes the manner in which we experience life. With all those other things we're trying to remember to do, if we remember Christ is living in us, we're not operating alone, you can almost feel some of that weight of life lift.

We have a God that completely puts Himself out there for His creation...doesn't rule from a distance like some far off king. No, our God enters directly into creation and the people that He loves, as we live by Faith.

Let us pray: Creator God, help us to remember that we are not in this alone, but you live through us every day. Sometimes we need a reminder. Thank you for the life you have blessed us with and may we live it abundantly, as you intended. Amen



Friday, November 13, 2015

What's In a Name?

Text: Isaiah 43:1

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

What's in a name? When Moses met with God at the burning bush, though not specific, God did give Moses His name. Do you ever think about God knowing your name? Not only knowing it, but using it to call you into the mission working with God? Well that's exactly what God does! A name is the gateway to a relationship because once you know someone's name and use it, you start to get to know each other better, and when you get to know each other better a trust is established, a relationship. And out of that relationship there is great joy in doing meaningful work together.

But as you read in the verse, it's even more than God calling you by name. God claims you as God's own. We must never forget not only who we are, but *whose* we are! The Creator of the universe and beyond looks at each one of us and says I am for you, I have called you by name, and you are mine.

Let us pray: *Gracious God, we offer our thanks to you for your trust and love. Give us strength in the midst of our brokenness that we may trust and love you as we work together to shine the light of Christ to the world. Amen.*



Saturday, November 14, 2015

Individual Sport?

Text: Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

These days there's a lot of emphasis on the individual, but in ministry there are no Lone Rangers. It's interesting that the metaphor for this verse is a race, as it is an individual sport. But, what else can you observe at races? Ever been to a marathon? I ran one and all those people packing both sides of the road for 26.2 miles, they give you that extra umf so when your muscles start breaking down, you can keep on going.

God's word in Hebrews speaks to us letting us know that we are not alone, we don't work

alone, nor are we called into this journey of faith alone. We are connected in one body with Christ at the head. Ministry and living our faith is hard, sometimes we start to drag, but we are called to support one another and work with others. This mission to which we are called gives life, not just upon completion...but all the way through the entire race. And remember, not only are we working with one another, but also alongside the "Perfecter of our faith," Christ Jesus. Amen

Let us pray: *Life-giving God, we thank you for the gifts you bless us with in each other. Bless us with endurance to run and to support each other as we journey together. Give us clarity in your mission and may we feel your presence, working alongside us. Amen*

