



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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The Discipleship Journey *The Road is Sometimes Hard to See*

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” John 9:1-2 NRSV

What sorts of things makes the Discipleship Road hard to see? What keeps us from walking the road God would have us walk? 1 Samuel 16 provides some insight as does John 9.

As 1 Samuel 16 starts, Samuel is grieving over the failure of Saul to be the King Israel needs. Saul was a competent warrior and could command the army. In many ways he was a powerful and good King but he had failed by being disobedient to God. So God had told Samuel that he was to anoint a new King of Israel. Yet, this news has saddened Samuel. He is grieving over Saul’s failure and the command of God to anoint a new King. So God starts out,

The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. 1 Sam 16:1

Simple grief can keep us from seeing the path God would have us walk. That sense of loss, of something not right in our world can blind us to what we must do next. Grief can leave us feeling lost and disoriented. Profound grief can cause us to lose interest in living. When our lives are overcome by grief or despair, we can find the road of discipleship hard to see.

II.

Fear of what will happen to us if we walk the road before us can cloud our sight. That also is at work in the life of the prophet Samuel. It was the role of the prophet to anoint the New Kings. But that is a problem when there is already a King in place and that is what has happened here. Saul is still the King of Israel and Samuel has told him that he has lost the favor of God. Saul already distrusts Samuel. Saul might see the act of Samuel anointing a new King an act of treason. And so Samuel argues with God:

² *Samuel said, “How can I go [and anoint a new king?] If Saul hears of it, he will kill me. 1 Samuel 16:2*

In our own lives, walking the paths that God would have us walk might bring us in conflict with family or friends. It might place our jobs or livelihood, or our very lives, in danger.

It can be dangerous to walk the road God calls us to walk. In the early 30s in Germany, the Nazi party began replacing the Christian Church in Germany with the Reich Church. Christian teachings were modified to conform to the goals and desire of the Nazi state. Hitler became a prophet of God on a par with Christ. It sounds outlandish. Sitting here in the comfort of our democracy and secure in our religious rights, we can't understand how Christians could ever buy into such a conversion. And some did not. There were those who continued to confess Christ as Lord and savior. They were called the Confessing Church. But the vast majority of Christians in Germany chose to follow Hitler instead of Christ because of the threat to their lives and property from the State. Fear obscured their view of the road God would have them walk. Instead of walking the road we see before us, our fear can keep us from clearly perceiving that road. Our fear obscures the road that God would have us walk.

III.

Other people may block our paths. God has sent Samuel to Bethlehem, far to the South of the lands where Saul has his palace. Yet, Saul is still the King of Israel and he rules over Bethlehem as well. Apparently the people of Bethlehem know that Samuel is no longer held in favor by Saul. The scripture says:

The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" 1 Samuel 16:4

The elders of the city fear that Samuel might be coming to incite rebellion against Saul and thereby bring the anger of Saul down upon them. And so they meet Samuel at the Gates of Bethlehem.

As with Samuel, we can find other's obscuring the paths we believe we should walk. These people may be friends, family members, or even other Christians. In 1963, Martin Luther King was jailed in Birmingham for protesting the discriminatory laws of that time. While there, well-meaning but misguided white pastors wrote him a letter telling him that he should not engage in acts of civil disobedience nor encourage others to do so. Now was not the time to act, they said. King responded that he was answering the call of God for justice; answering the call of Christ to spread and live the Gospel. Sometimes our closest family and friends, even other Christians may, with the best of intentions, attempt to obscure the road before us.

IV.

Finally, our own prejudices, biases or preconceived notions may obscure our vision; may keep us from seeing the roads that God would have us walk.

Samuel has been sent to the house of Jesse of Bethlehem to anoint a new king from among his sons. When Samuel looks on Jesse's eldest son he concludes that this must be the man because this man looks like a King: But God tells him:

Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." 1 Sam 16:17

Our preconceived notions about how God works can make it hard for us to see the road, hard to see where God would have us walk. Something very much like that is going on in this passage from John. The Disciples look on a man blind from birth and immediately assume that this man is being punished by God.

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” John 9:1-2

The Disciples don't perceive the opportunity to bring someone the grace of God because they have already concluded that that this man is blind because of the punishment of God. They can't see the path God invites them to walk because they are so certain that they already know the mind of God.

This tendency is alive and well in among many Christians today. People will say that if someone has fallen on hard times, that must be the will of God. God offers them an opportunity to reach out to another person in love and share the grace of God, and they don't see it because they are so sure that they already know the mind of god. The most extreme example of that type of Christian died last year. Fred Phelps of the Westboro Baptist Church was so busy explaining to everyone that he knew the mind of God and understood God's judgments that he failed to offer the Grace of God, the peace of Christ, to anyone. God called him to bring a message of hope and new life through Christ and he could only perceive a road of preaching hate and condemnation.

Conclusion

It is hard sometimes to see the road that God would have us walk. Many things can obscure that road, including grief, despair, anger, fear and self-righteousness. It is only when we stop and remind ourselves that we are called to follow a God of love and justice that we can perceive the path that God would have us walk. If you aren't sure of the road you're walking, look around and ask yourself if you are sharing the Gospel of Christ. Are you bringing love and hope to those around you? Are you calling for justice from those in power even if you are afraid? Are people of like mind walking with you? If so, then the chances are good that you are seeing clearly the road God would have you walk. Amen.

It Hurts

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. Romans 8:26

In the space of ten days we have lost three of our members: Sarah Jordan, Millie Fly and Nanette Crowell. In almost 18 years of ministry I have never experienced anything quite like this. The weight of these three deaths is almost too much to bear. Death is always difficult, no matter when it comes in our lives. God made us to love life and we always feel pain and loss when someone we love dies. Even Christ, before he prayed that Lazarus be raised, wept in grief. John 11:35. We acknowledge that those who have died still live on in the presence of God but that does not diminish our sense of loss. We take comfort in the knowledge that their pain is ended, but ours remains.

Someone recently asked me how we find meaning in this situation. I replied that the only meaning I have found in these situations is the response of the Church, the Body of Christ. We honor those who have passed by continuing to love those around us. We give comfort to one another and we especially surround those families affected with that love. Don't look for words to share. Most of the time there are no words of comfort. But there is comfort in a ministry of presence; a touch, a hug, a smile, even in shared tears. As Paul reminds us, the Spirit helps us out in times like these by offering prayers too deep to be expressed in words. Finally, keep in

mind some of the final words of Christ: *Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.* John 14:27.

Nanette Crowell on Trinity UMC

Nanette spoke in Sunday Worship at the 2011 observance of Laity Sunday. At Dana Bauguess' request she provided Dana with a copy of her notes. Dana has shared them with some members of the church and I'm sharing them here:

“What does it mean to me to be a member of Trinity” By Nanette Crowell

God never intended us to go our life journey alone, we come to Trinity to feel closer to God and grow in his holy spirit. Throughout scripture, God provides friends for support. During tough times King David turned to his dear friend Jonathan, when Naomi lost her husband and sons, she leaned on her daughter in law Ruth, and even Jesus, when he felt anxious about dying on the cross, asked his three closest friends to come pray with him.

Here at Trinity we share our joys and sorrows. We pray for each other. We balance each other. When we truly love God more than anything else, we want to be able to share what's most important to us and other believers can fully understand our passion for Christ.

When I come to Trinity, I SEE JESUS...I see Jesus as..

..I watch Jessica Moore light the candles on Sunday mornings

..when I see Maurice, Joyce, and Linda Allison come back so soon after their surgeries because of the love and support they feel here

..I see Jesus when Dana participates in a cancer walk and dyes her hair pink in honor of Joyce Edwards

I see Jesus when I enter my Sunday school class each Sunday and learn more about God with Houston, Raven, and Tristen.

I hear Jesus ..when Rachel and Hal compose and write a musical for God and 18 people at our little church sing in it.

I see Jesus when Charles and Cheryl work so hard to organize the fish fries, BBQs, and 61st Street with the help of so many, like Elva and Nancy who organize the bake sale

I see Jesus when I see generations of Trinity families --like the Whitefields, the Salazars, and the Stephens sitting in their pews

I feel Jesus' healing power when Patricia and Kenneth are back in church after her accident

I see hope and renewal when we have new members like the Eastwoods, Linda Robinson and Aislynn, and when the next generations join like Eric and Jessica B.

.. I see Tom Moore's can do attitude

I see Jesus, when Bert and Jim are walking down the center aisle on Sunday morning, and Millie's big smile from the front row.

I hear Jesus when my husband sings

I feel Jesus when GL gives me a big bear hug and says “How are you doing kid?”

I hear Jesus, when Colette plays beautiful music, and Lynn leads the choir in a moving song, or when Howard, Pearl, or Pam sing and when Lois at 96 plays the organ

I feel Jesus when Pat calls to see where I was last Sunday or Mary Coleman bakes us her special bread,
I feel Jesus when Dennis blesses us with his sermons, or when I hear of healing from Herb and Betty Haynes or
Wayne Harper,
And on first Sunday's. When Jo Cotton and Wanda lovingly make sure everything is set and Jo Ann brings her
banana pudding or Jo Oliphant brings her mother's pies.
or at Easter when Jeannie and Nancy wear great hats in support of the youth
I hear Jesus when Renita, Elaine, Julia, Charles or Donnie read scripture
When Tommy, Bill, Dorise, Rodger, Cherry and Ross take up the offering
I see Jesus in Trinity's long time bible scholars like Sarah and Tom
I feel Jesus presence in bible studies and caroling to the sick, laughing at the women's group, or hearing about
the men's group at the golden corral, and taking communion.
I saw Jesus when Ken Harry died, and even though his family didn't come or acknowledge us, we still showed
our love by having a service for him
I see Jesus when Marty and Mike greet me as I come into the sanctuary.
You see all of you are God's messengers.

You may be the one who determines whether or not someone learns about Christ from your handshake, your
warmth, your witness or your example, you can and do make the difference in someone's life.

Jesus said in Matthew, you are the light for other people, live so they
will see the good things you do, so that they will praise our Father in Heaven.
And folks, That's why I come to Trinity .
May God's Holy Spirit continue to grow in each of us.

One Hundred and Fifty Years Living As The Body of Christ

It's this weekend! Come and be a part of the celebration of 150 Years living as the Body of Christ in
this community.

The Poverty and Justice Bible

The Poverty & Justice Bible is a bible that highlights each passage of scripture that deals with the issues
of poverty and justice. There are more than 2000 references in scripture to poverty and justice, as opposed to
four or five on such controversial subjects as homosexual acts or marriage. Yet many Christians seem to think
that helping the poor is a pointless and even harmful act. As an on-going part of this newsletter, I will be
providing citations to passages from the Old and New Testaments each week that deal with what scripture tells
us about poverty and justice. If you are interested in learning more about *The Poverty & Justice Bible* you can
check on Amazon.com or go to www.Justicebible.org.

¹⁻³ *The LORD sent me to the palace of the king of Judah to speak to the king, his officials, and everyone else who
was there. The LORD told me to say:*

*I am the LORD, so pay attention! You have been allowing people to cheat, rob, and take advantage of
widows, orphans, and foreigners who live here. Innocent people have become victims of violence, and some of
them have even been killed. But now I command you to do what is right and see that justice is done. Rescue
everyone who has suffered from injustice. Jeremiah 22:1-3 CEV*

Jeremiah had the unenviable task of speaking to those in power about God's justice. Then, as now, those in power often do not wish to hear that they are supposed to care about what happens to ALL the people, not just those who are wealthy or who support them. Consider what God might have to say about those in power in this nation when it comes to looking after the welfare of the widows, orphans and foreigners in our midst. What might God have to say about protecting those who encounter violence? Under the law of God, the welfare of the community is everyone's responsibility.

⁴⁵ The king will say to them, "Whenever you failed to help any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you failed to do it for me." Matthew 25:45 CEV.

Jesus concurs.

Prayer Ministry

The following persons are part of the prayer ministry at Trinity UMC:

| | | | |
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| Elva Beard | Sarah Jordan | Kenneth Stevens | Judy Richardson |
| Larry Eastwood | Mac McAfee | Patricia Stevens | Charles Wilson |
| Leslie Eastwood | Rachel Newman | Sam Richardson | |

The members of the prayer ministry of Trinity United Methodist church covenant with one another to pray daily for:

- Those concerns on the prayer list of the Church and for healing of body and spirit for all persons listed;
- For each ministry of the church that each ministry would work to bring the Gospel to those within our community and most especially to bring the Gospel to those who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- For all the members of the Trinity UMC community that they be led and enabled to live as the Body of Christ;
- For our local community and all its needs, especially for those who are struggling with the burden of poverty;
- For our nation and our world that God help lead the people of the world to live in peace with God's Kingdom.

If you would like to be a part of this ministry (or if you have already spoken to me about it and were inadvertently left off the list) please let me know and I will see that you are added.

Up-Coming Sermons

June 14th: Sermon: To be Christian, You Must Believe in the Resurrection. In the First Century or the 21st Century, this is still a difficult belief. How can we believe in the resurrection? My texts are Isaiah 25:6-9 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-20; 54-56.

June 21st: Sibling Rivalry Can Get You In Trouble. Most people think David and Goliath was all about, well David and Goliath. There was more to the story. My text is are Samuel 17:1-49

Worship Leader's Schedule

June 14

Houston Hartsock, **Liturgist**
Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Greeters**
Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Ushers**

June 21

Hal Newman, **Liturgist**
Jan & Stacy Bell, **Greeters**
Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Ushers**

Announcements

The 2015 church directories are finished. Copies of the directory are available on the back table. We have enough directories for each family to have one copy.

Please sign up to be host/hostess for the first Sunday meal. The sign-up list is on the bulletin board.

The Catfish Supper is scheduled for this Saturday, June 13 from 4:00 to 7:00 PM. A bake sale is taking place at the same time. Please make plans to contribute baked items for this fund-raiser. Please plan to bake treats that can be packaged easily.
Please make your friends and neighbors aware of this event and encourage them to come to enjoy great food and fellowship

The Sesquicentennial celebration will be observed this weekend. Please make plans to be present for worship Sunday morning and for a reception following the worship service.

June Birthdays

Lynn McGill, Jo Cotton, Mike Fetting, Richard Stevens, Nancy Conway, Kenneth Stevens, Larry Eastwood, June Pollard

Happy Birthday to each of you!