



GOBIN CHURCH
A United Methodist Community for All

Saturday, September 19, 2020

Matthew 19:23-30

PONDER: In the world of Jesus, everyone gets because everyone gives. Because everyone gives, everyone receives. It is not a selfish world. It is a reaching out to others world. And when everyone reaches out, everyone is benefiting. In such a world, we don't have to worry about a roof over our heads, or about brothers and sisters, or property or security. It is where love and justice meet. For too many people in our world, there is neither love nor justice. Jesus is clear that money and riches can be a real obstacle to enter the Kingdom. Think about your relationship with money. Is there a balanced attitude, or does it affect the freedom of your choices? Let yourself be touched by God's generosity and faithfulness.

PRAYER: Dear God, There areas in my life that I could give more, rather than wanting to receive more. Help me acknowledge that and to live more generously. Thank you for those who are generous with me. Amen.

ACTION: Find a new way to be generous. Include a written note offering a blessing to those who receive, and saying you are blessed by giving.

Monday, September 14, 2020

Hebrews 11:23-29

PONDER: Knowing our faith history can be a source of strength and inspiration in challenging times. The story of Moses did that for the Hebrew people, just as it can for us today. Finding himself in circumstances sometimes beyond his control, Moses did not give up or give in, but maintained his trust in God and took action to be the leader his people needed. Visiting a small country church recently, I heard the story of how the congregation was faced with losing their beloved worship space when a coal mine edged up to their property. Their land was targeted to be consumed by the mining operation, but the church leaders negotiated with the mining company to move the church building a few miles away to a new location. Of course, the building is not the source of or reason for their faith, but this small congregation proudly tells that story as being a challenge their community met and overcame to maintain their history and to continue their discipleship. Think about the challenges you or your family has faced from outside forces? How did God work with you and through you during that challenging time? Know that God remains with you as you face the challenges ahead.

PRAYER: Dear God, Thank you for your strength-giving presence when the odds seem against me and it is tempting to give up. I trust in your guidance to keep me moving forward in kindness, with compassion, and with determination for the best possible outcome in all situations. Amen.

ACTION: Deliver a healthy snack and a note of encouragement to a history teacher or professor. Thank them for sharing stories of the past.

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

Romans 14:13-15:2

PONDER: The rattle of Yahtzee dice on a tabletop and the cheers or sneers of young people filled my dining room one evening. The kids had friends visiting, and the competition was fierce as the dice rolled and the strategy of marking score cards was argued. Have you ever experienced a friendly competition turn sour when luck seems to run out or a snarky comment is said at the wrong time. An experiment was soon introduced to the game with a new “rule” added. We must cheer for everyone and hope they roll what they need every time. Each player still has to try to win, but it's better if others win because we get to see them be happy about it. Stunned silence. Then slow nodding and agreement. The game continued and soon the fun had a different tone. We had removed the stumbling blocks of our own need for success and replaced it with a hope for things that build each other up. At the end of the game, the visiting friend who won – usually a fierce competitor in all things academic and athletic -- was not only mildly pleased with her own result, but happily recounted how she had cheered for the others. What attitude do you take into competition? Do your strategies try to bring everyone to the finish line, or only yourself?

PRAYER: Dear God, The game of life sometimes has many obstacle to overcome. Help me be a helper to those who get trapped in the game, and let us all approach the finish line together with a better attitude. Amen.

ACTION: Participate in a game night with friends. Make an effort to lift up other players. Be sure to bring snacks to share.

Wednesday, September 16, 2020

Mark 11:20-25

PONDER: Forgiveness is not synonymous with healing or reconciliation. Healing has its own timetable, and sometimes reconciliation isn't possible. Sometimes we need to sever ties with our offenders, even after we've forgiven them. I'm often inspired by the forgiveness message of Eva Kor, the Holocaust survivor who died last year after spending more than half of her life talking about her experiences as a child in a Nazi concentration camp. When I first met Eva as a student at Indiana State University, she was an angry person, enraged by what had happened to her and her family at the hands of the Nazis. But 20 years later, we talked again, and her focus had shifted to forgiveness of the people who had hurt her and forgiveness of the regime that had destroyed millions of lives. She received a lot of criticism for her statements of forgiveness. Even her husband Mickey was not on board with it — until a few months ago. Mickey submitted a written statement at the recent trial of a Nazi prison guard who was himself a teenager when he carried a rifle at a concentration camp at the end of World War II. Mickey wrote in that statement that his wife Eva had been right. Forgiveness was possible. He didn't mean that his wounds were healed, but he was tired of holding on to the hurt. Who have you forgiven or not forgiven? By whom do you need to be forgiven? Pray about that.

PRAYER: Dear God, so many times I have done things or said things that I shouldn't have. So many times I have not done things or not said things that I should have. May those I have wronged forgive me. Help me forgive those who have wronged me. Amen.

ACTION: Make a donation of food or supplies to an animal shelter, and if possible, volunteer to play with some of the animals waiting for adoption. Notice how a dog who may have had a rough past is willing to move forward to a promising future.

Thursday, September 17, 2020

Psalm 145:1-8

PONDER: Walking along the beach in Alabama a few years ago, I came upon a few sand dollars washed up after an overnight storm. I found many broken pieces of flat sand dollars, but a couple of the bleached white circles were whole. Legend says the sand dollars are actually coins lost by mermaids or the people of Atlantis. Some Christian missionaries have used the skeletal sea urchins to tell the story of the birth and death of Jesus. On the back of the sand dollar is a design shaped like an Easter lily. In the center of it is the tracing of the star that guided the wise men to the Christ child. On the other side are the markings of the Christmas poinsettia. In the middle are holes representing the wounds in Jesus' body when He was crucified. Break open the shell and tiny white wing-like objects fall out. Legend says they are the white doves that spread goodwill and peace. Turning every encounter with God's creation into a story about God's goodness, mercy and love is a celebration of our faith. What stories can you share about simple things in your life that connect you to God?

PRAYER: Dear God, Thank you for the shattered bits of your earthly kingdom that draw me closer to wholeness in You. Amen.

ACTION: Make a new sign praising God, and put it in a window where everyone can see it.

Friday, September 18, 2020

2 Corinthians 13:5-10

PONDER: Doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do is not always the easiest thing to do. Many volunteers at food bank distributions know this. Getting organized. Filling and stacking boxes. Offering kind words of encouragement to people receiving a blessing. Those are all the right things to do. And yet, in our current pandemic, many of the volunteers who normally do those things have had to stay home to protect their health. They have done the right thing, no matter how hard. To fill the gap of missing volunteers, the Indiana National Guard was deployed to aid Indiana's food banks. But the guard members will end their temporary, six-month deployment at the end of the month. Guard members served more than 36 million meals to more than four million Hoosiers. While recent months have been challenging with many changes to our lives, we can remain thankful that people continued to receive the food they needed because Guard members filled the gap.

PRAYER: Dear God, In critical times, you help find ways to fill critical gaps. We join you in blessing those who filled the workforce gaps for food distributions, and we continue to praise those volunteers who have devoted their time and energy to feeding others. Amen.

ACTION: Sign up to volunteer for food distributions at an area food pantry. If you need more information, go online to [OperationFood.IN.gov](https://www.operationfood.in.gov).