

Sermon: May 5, 2019

**"Fastening my belt"**

We all have dreams and goals and plans.

I think of these little "goofs" ... coming up here every Sunday morning to listen to my sometimes ridiculous stories. These young kids ---- their dreams have no limits. Not limited by money or reality. Yes, the freedom to dream!! To be President someday. Star of the opera or Broadway. Famous athlete. Wrigley Field. Sox park. Minister of a medium-sized Lutheran church!@!! (right????)

When we get to high school or college age ... our dreams can become a little more tempered by reality.

Money, grades, support or lack of support from home.

Some of you, I'm sure ... have had some of your dreams come to fruition. You've worked hard ... and you've got it done!!

For some of us ... our lives have gone in a direction we never could have imagined. We're doing stuff we never thought we'd have to do. Things happen to us and to those we love ... and our lives go in a totally different direction.

Somehow ... in the middle of all we go through ..... yes, we have to roll with the punches.

We get knocked down ... then we get back up.

This is where we meet God.

This is where the spirit lives.

In the midst of our unpredictable journey ... mixed with dreams and reality ... This is where God kind-of grabs us and says ... in the silence of our own souls ...

*"It matters not who you are ... or where you are ...  
whatever kind of work you do.*

*It matters not how much money you have or don't have ...  
no matter how you define wealth or success ....*

**YOU ARE MINE. YOU ARE MY CHILD.**

**YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE ..... AND I WILL NEVER LET YOU GO!!**

There is something a little "different" today.

The sun is out. And, of course ... the "son" we worship is out, too.

It feels good. The warmth and the gentle breeze.

When the smell and look of spring are finally in the "aire" ... it's like the ordinary routines don't feel quite so ordinary.

Walkin' my wonder-dog Harley. Bringing him to church. Making a pot of coffee at home ... then making it here. I so enjoy the freedom to get up and go about my "routines."

And it's so easy to take these common tasks for granted.

So, I'm going about my "stuff" this morning ... and my thoughts turn to a couple people I visited this week. My racquetball buddy Terry. His competitive spirit. His family. Life is so different for him now ... even tho' he may not even know it. His is in "memory care" ... deep in a journey with Alzheimer's.

He's no longer in control. Can't make his own decisions.

I'm sitting on the couch, next to him. He grabs my hand ... and he takes me on a walk. From one end of the place to the other. Into other peoples' rooms. We just keep on walkin'. No need to go to the health club today!!

When we are done ... he looks at me. As if to say "thanks."

A moment of "GRACE." Maybe he can't "do" what he used to. Or "control" what he used to.

But ----- he can exude GRACE.

My next stop? ----- DANNY.

Danny is developmentally disabled ... and he's sitting right over there with his sister Karen. Danny doesn't speak. When I get to where he lives ... he is in the common area ----- kind-of falling asleep in his chair. He sees me ... then puts his hands together like this ---- his way of saying he wants to go to church. The three most important things in his life: his sister Karen, the church, and "what's on the menu." I say "hi" ... he wants a "kiss" ..... and I remind him: only one "kiss" per visit!!  
Danny may not have a lot of "control" over his life ... but he has one gift that will never go away: GRACE.

I, like you .... I'd like to be independent 'til the very end of my life.  
But you know something???? ---- there is no guarantee!!

Jesus says something in the gospel for today that hits close to home.  
Jesus knows his time is almost up. He doesn't want it to be ..... but he can feel it.  
Sure ... he wishes the Jewish leaders would understand his message ... and be more receptive to "all God's children." But ---- even Jesus can't control that!!

Jesus says to his followers:

*When you are young ... you fasten your own belt. And you go wherever you wish.  
But when you grow old ... you have to stretch out your hands ... someone else has to fasten your belt,  
and you may have to go where you don't want to go.*

That might be me someday.

Maybe you.

I think of Terry .... I think of Danny ...

Not fastening their own belt ... not going where they would want to go ...  
not being where they thought they'd be.

But ----- they reach into our hearts ... with grace, and a child-like spirit.  
Actually ... this is the way Jesus wants us to live ---- every day!!

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