

Messengers of Grace

ANIETA HOPPER | AUGUST 30, 2017

We have a neighbor who is the strangest person I've ever met. He is intelligent and well-read, but physically very ill which leads to some very odd behaviors. The other neighbors want nothing to do with him. He is an outcast. To add fuel to the fire there were three Sheriff's vehicles at his house for several hours a few weeks ago, and that started tongues to wag. There was gossip, disgust, outrage, disdain, rejection, speculation and self-righteousness manifested. The pressure was put on to be a part of this. We were mocked for our efforts to befriend him by people who do not understand our mission in life.

The law had showed up at his door. The greater question that we asked ourselves was "would grace?" Grace and love do not equal approval or acceptance of behavior, but it is what Christ extends to us in our lost and fallen state. It was up to us to be messengers and channels of his grace even if it meant we were misunderstood, ridiculed, rejected and mocked for it. Obedience to God trumps reputation and personal security. Love requires sacrifice. People who say the Christian life is for weaklings and cowards don't understand true Christianity. God challenges us and stretches us daily. Scriptures are a lot easier to quote than they are to live out. We were not told to take up our crutch but to take up our cross daily and follow him.

Jesus was missional. He was intentional. His whole life followed the purpose for which he came – to seek and to save that which is lost. He sacrificed his reputation to hang out with sinners. He carried the cross in preparation for his crucifixion knowing that others would nail him to it. He willingly laid down His life that we might be saved.

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In Mark 1:40-42, we read the story of the man with leprosy – the outcast, the unclean man. Jesus, moved by compassion, broke all social codes and reached out and touched the man. He wasn't contaminated by the leper but the leper was "contaminated" with His righteousness.

Like Jesus we need to be missional. We need to be intentional. We need to be prepared through prayer and study of the Word. We need to have an open heart and a listening ear. We need to allow him to do his perfect work in us of transforming us into his likeness. Jesus and his will and purposes should be the governing power in our life. Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

There is a cross specifically designed for you today. Are you willing to take up your cross and follow –wherever he leads, whatever it means, however he wants to use you?

October 1, 2017

FOCUS Wesleyan Church

"Encouragement for the Journey of Faith"

Joshua 24 "*Strength for Kingdom Service*"

Sermon Notes:

Joshua 24:1-4; 11-25

1. Service is connected to

_____ (v. 2)

Ephesians 2:1-10

2. Service is _____ by everyone (v. 15)

3. Faithful service is

_____ (vv. 23-24)

Ephesians 2:10

Reflection: What is one new thing you believe God spoke to you today as a result of worshipping at FOCUS?

The Word of God directs us as we consider what the *next step* is for our lives. What is your next step? Have you ever thought about how people have been created to serve something or someone? If you are honest, what or who have you been serving? If serving the LORD is your truest heart's desire, what idols will you need to destroy and throw away this week?

Challenge: This week I will pray for following unsaved friend (s) or family member (s):

Communion at FOCUS

Every Sunday at FOCUS we celebrate the Lord's Table, also known as Communion. We have open communion which means all are invited to receive. We receive communion elements by intinction. Tearing off a small piece of the loaf of bread, dipping it in the communion glass of juice, and then consuming it immediately. Please note, upon your request, we also have gluten free elements for those with gluten and other major food allergies.

Kroger Community Rewards

If you already shop at Kroger, and have not already signed up for *Community Rewards*, we would love to invite you to join and add FOCUS as your local organization designate. Visit: www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow or call 1-800-576-4377. And search for "FOCUS Ministries Georgetown - 11616" when signing up online, or by phone.

Youth Group tonight! - 6:30 - 8 PM!

Friends welcome, snacks provided!

FOCUS Family Fun Friday - October 13, 6:30 PM

FOCUS will be having a family movie night out on the lawn of the North side of the church building. Popcorn and water provided! Consider inviting some families and friends for a fun evening together!

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