

What to Do?

October 28, 2018

TCC

Reflections on Mark 10:17-31 and Micah 6:8

Jesus was speaking directly to the rich young man. Jesus said to him, "You only lack one thing: *give up your possessions and follow me.*" It was the one thing he needed in order to come on board to be a disciple. But you and I know there are plenty of good rich people. And there are plenty of poor people that have their own "one thing." Only our own consciences can inform us today of what our "one thing" is. We have to be honest, honest with ourselves as much as possible, honest with each other, honest with God...

To reach God's Kingdom requires and taking on and a giving up. We take on the cross (or the burdens of life for the sake of Christ), we give up what keeps us from stepping into the light of God. It's a process of discernment, a process of looking deeply and telling the truth.

In the Hebrew Scripture of Micah we are told that God requires of us three things: Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God. Three little things, which are lifelong undertakings... It's all a lifelong undertaking. This is why we gather each week, not twice a year, not once a month, but every week: *so that we might learn what it is we lack, what it is to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly.*

The people of New Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh were doing the same thing yesterday and for generations that we are doing today. They were looking at their lives, what might have been missing, what they might take on and what they needed to let go of. They were doing one of the things that we most cherish in this country: they were worshiping the way they wanted to. They were practicing their faith with like-minded people. And they paid for that privilege with their lives.

Let's say this morning that there is only one of us here. Let's say that humanity is the body of Christ. Like our cherished little church here that we call our church family, let's expand that and say that we are all the churches, all the synagogues, all the mosques, and all the temples. Let's expand that and say that we are all the travelers, all the seekers, all the crazy ones and even all the bad ones. Friends, we got issues. We got ailments. Our hearts are breaking for the worshipers at New Life Synagogue. Our hearts are breaking for the Land of the Free.

We can look at justice this morning as revenge. We can usurp the throne of God and say, "If I go wipe out these persons, I am meting out God's justice." We can do that, or we can speak in ways that do that, or we can think thoughts that do that. Our thoughts and our words grow into actions. Or we can look at justice this morning as inclusion. We can look at justice as plenty for all. We can look at justice as reverence for life, all of life.

In the Body this morning there are illnesses. There are illnesses of hatred, exclusion, coldness and prejudice. Let's you and me be the cure.

In the Body this morning there are injustices. There are injustices of poverty, racism, bigotry, and petty grievances. Let's you and me be the solution.

In the Body this morning there are ways of speaking and small and large actions that cause our most despicable impulses to rise up and inspire acts of violence and destruction. Let's you and me, please, be the thoughts and acts of loving kindness that put those impulses out of commission. Let's be the antidote to the hatred. Let's be the shining example of inclusion, faithfulness and forgiveness. Let's be the candle in the darkness, the city on the hill. Let's be those who walk humbly and pray fervently and love in ways that transform and heal.

That's what I'm interested in today. Everything we do makes a difference. That's so easy to forget, so hard to remember. That is why we're here, to remember. If you have a declaration of intention today, let it be heard. If you have a commitment to cure hatred, to love kindness, do justice and walk humbly, say so right now in your heart of hearts, what God can count on you for from this day forward.