



JUNE 21, 2020

LOVE FIRST, FIRST LOVE

WEEK DEVOTIONAL BASED ON SUNDAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP SUNDAYS 9:00AM AT
WWW.FIRSTLUTHERAN-BARRON.ORG OR ON THE RADIO 97.7FM

Matthew 10:24-39

24 "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; 25 it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! 26 "So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. 27 What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. 28 Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 And even the hairs of your head are all counted. 31 So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. 32 "Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; 33 but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. 34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 and one's foes will be members of one's own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

HOLDING IN PRAYER

For health and healing we pray for: Valri Scheps, DeAnn Anderson, Eugene Olson, Ron Kahl, Kathy Weghorn, Betty Missling and Gail Larson

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Teach us, good Lord God, to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, except that of knowing that we do your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

REFLECTION

BY PASTOR RON MATHEWS

Is there any more of a pervasive or powerful motivating force in the human experience than fear?

Fear is the primary motivational tool we used for kids. Get a good grade in school. Why? Because if you don't you won't get a good job and thus you will not have a good/successful life. I remember when I was little I was taught "Stranger Danger." The teaching was simple: strangers are people who you do not know, and they are out to kidnap children or hurt them. Therefore, we were taught to never, ever talk to a stranger. Now there's a reason this isn't taught anymore because what happened is an entire generation grew up believing that all strangers are not to be trusted. Or worse, we created the mentality that if I don't know you, I automatically assume you are going to do me harm. Try to balance this ingrained teaching with the new family that just moved next door! It is hard to meet new people and be welcoming if the first thought is to protect myself and my kids from the new person.

Today's Gospel lesson continues from last week where Jesus instructed the Disciples that they are to go to places they have never been before, meet people they have never met before, and be His hands and feet. Today's continuance is where Jesus' disciples leave the security of their homes and families to follow him as they proclaim the advent of God's reign. Jesus recognizes also that fear will cause the failure of discipleship by people placing their trust in something other than God. And some will ultimately bow before the power of fear. For example, Judas' betrayal for silver coins and Peter's denial of even knowing Jesus not once but three times.

As Jesus prepares his disciples for their mission to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," he is starkly realistic about the threats they will face, at the same time he builds the case for why they should not let this fear master them or hinder their witness.

The threat of death or harm may be the most powerful form of fear. This was the core teaching of "Stranger Danger." In verses 28-31 Jesus' words of assurance are filled with irony. The right to cause harm is one of the go to tools of human political power. (As Alice learned in Wonderland, you do what the Queen says or "off with your head!")

In 1983 Daryl Davis, a black musician, was in search of answering one question "why do people hate me who have never met me?" In search of learning about the source of hate, Mr. Davis was led to meet with Roger Kelly, who was at that time an Imperial Wizard which is the national leadership position of the Ku Klux Klan. When Davis received Kelly's number he was told to not talk with this man because Kelly would kill him. Mr. Davis ignored this warning and set up a meeting, not telling Mr. Kelly that he was a black man, they met in a hotel room. Mr. Kelly arrived on time with an armed bodyguard. When they walk into the room they were noticeably caught off guard to be meeting with a black man. Despite it all, Mr. Kelly and Mr. Davis agreed to have a

conversation, sitting at opposite sides of a table when there was a loud crashing noise. Both were startled by the noise that ended up just being soda cans that had settled after the ice had melted. But it was in that moment that Mr. Davis reflects what he learned:

"Ignorance breeds fear. We fear those things we do not understand. If we don't keep that fear in check, that fear in turn, will breed hatred. Because we hate those things that frighten us. If we don't keep that hatred in check, that hatred in turn, will breed destruction. We want to destroy those things, that we hate. Why? Because it causes us to be afraid."

Fear developed out of ignorance – out of not knowing or understanding. We fear people who are not like us places that are different technology that doesn't make sense

The way we break this cycle is to stop being ignorant. It starts with naming what you are afraid of. This is why Jesus is anything but blunt about the hardships that the Disciples will endure. He names them aloud for all to hear. By naming it, fear loses its grip.

After we name what we are afraid of, our next step is to stop being ignorant. We can do this by about learning about the things we do not know or understand and by developing a relationship with people we do not know. The best way to not fear our neighbors is to walk over to their house, ring the bell and simply say "hi." Learn their name, it's a start. It took years, but eventually Roger Kelly grew to appreciate people of color and left the KKK. And, because of their relationship, Daryl Davis became the Godfather to Mr. Kelly's grandchild.

WHAT IS FEAR HOLDING YOU FROM?

WHAT RELATIONSHIPS IS FEAR PREVENTING YOU FROM HAVING?

HOW IS FEAR PREVENTING YOU FROM LIVING AS A BELIEVER OF CHRIST?

