

Community of Grace

DAILY WALK WEEK OF AUGUST 29, 2022

Faith in Action: Commitment to Discipleship
Written by Wanda Mulkey

Monday, September 5, 2022

Read: Matthew 10:34-42 I can't sing. I wish I could, but singing was not a gift that God bestowed on me. I do have talents other than singing. I can read books to children and keep their attention, I can tell stories, I can bake cakes, I can entertain friends and family. But the one gift I most desire is the gift of song. I sit in church and envy the people in the choir (even though envy is not what God is looking for on those mornings.) And I feel extremely sorry for the ones I sit behind during Sunday worship because I can belt out those old hymns. The ones we all grew up with. However, no matter how hard I prayed for this talent when I was younger, my singing never got better. In fact, it is worse. Now David likes to kid me about it. He, who has a musical ear, hears all my flaws. Because of this, I sing a lot around the house. For instance, if he ends a sentence with "tonight", I'll start singing "Tonight, tonight, won't be just any night" from West Side Story or if he says something about "tomorrow," I might just burst out with "The sun will come out tomorrow," from Annie. It is the only time that horrible singing is appreciated by me. For several years, I coordinated the weddings at my previous church. The church was small with incredibly beautiful stained-glass windows. Therefore, many non-members would use the church for their special day. Most of the time, it was the best job I could have. (And I received a small stipend for my time which was greatly appreciated by this stay-at-home mom.) But sometimes, it was difficult. Since it was a Methodist Church, no alcohol was allowed. One Saturday, after everyone left, I

found a children's Sunday school room littered with empty beer cans and Bourbon bottles. Then I had the task to quickly clean them up and discard before the next day. I have been screamed at by a grandmother for allowing the guests to eat while the bride and groom were taking pictures even though I had nothing to do with the reception. Afterward, I apologized to the grandmother and got her calmed down before she ruined this couple's day. One bride wanted a secular song played while she walked down the aisle. This was perfectly okay except the song was so suggestive that I had to take her aside and remind her that this was a church and the song was inappropriate. I am thankful that it was one of my duties to be at the rehearsal. At one of these wedding rehearsals, our pianist casually asked me why I was not in the choir. I told her that I was not a singer. I couldn't carry a tune. She replied, "Your voice carries. I think if you came to me, I could help you. Let me hear you sing." Well, I thought about it and I could sing "Amazing Grace" pretty well in the shower. That would be the best song to show my range. You would have thought I was auditioning for "America's Got Talent." After the wedding party left, she began to play. I stepped up to the mike. "Amazzzing Grace. How sweeet the sound, that saaaaved aa wretch liiiiike meeeee." She stopped playing. I stopped singing. I slowly turned toward her. I was smiling as I waited for the Golden Ticket. Then, she said, "Maybe you could start a bell choir." God does not give us all the same talents. Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you so much for all the talents you do give us. Help us to continue to praise you name in song and deeds. In Jesus's name we pray, Amen

Tuesday, September 6, 2022

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Read: 1 Timothy 4:6-16 Now that I am older (notice I didn't use the term "old",) I have been wondering about why God would decide to age us this way. My bones and joints ache, it gets harder every year to keep up with my grandchildren, I don't concentrate as well as I did in the past, my memory is shot and once I get in the floor, it takes fifteen minutes to maneuver my way back up. He could have stopped the aging process at age 30 or even 40. We could have lived at this age for 60 more years with all our energy, then pass peacefully in our sleep. But now I think I have the answer. We need to slow down. We need to observe what is going on around us. And as we age, we can feel God's presence more clearly. And I think he puts the desire in us to make sure our families will be ready to follow Him when we are gone. My son's family lives in Charleston. My daughter's family lives near David and me. Two grands in Charleston, one in Grayson. We try to see the Charleston Mulkeys as much as possible, but we spend much more time with my daughter, her wife and son, Knox. He will be the one that I will have the most influence over and hopefully I will be able to give him my belief system. It is simple. I love God above all, I love my family and will do all I can to help them, I love my friends and hope they feel they can count on me - and - I have come to realize that I love everyone (it doesn't matter who they are, what nationality, religion, political views or capabilities.) I love them all, especially the children. I try to be kind, courteous, and forgiving. And I think Knox is seeing this, not only from me but from his moms. Because, you see, children learn from experience, from seeing. Not from some grandmother telling them how to act or who to care for. This year is Knox's first

year to take his Confirmation Class. Of course, I signed him right up. He didn't act like he was too excited about it. When I picked him up, he started complaining about going. He had too much homework, he was tired. I started talking about God and about the Lutheran faith. How after three years, he will know more that I ever will about our shared beliefs because I was not raised Lutheran. We arrived a little early, so we started to help set up the food for dinner. He was still acting a little strange. We sat down to eat and my friend Rose, who was sitting at our table, asked him if he was excited about Confirmation. "Well, not exactly. You see, I go to school all day, have a ton of homework, then I get to go to church for another hour or two." She then asked him, "Then why are you here?" He started grinning. And pointing with his thumb toward me, said "This lady." I'll take that. I'll take that any day. Because I am old enough to be "that lady". The one that drags you to church for Wednesday night Confirmation. "That lady" that loves him enough to talk to him about my Lord. "That lady" that schools him in how to be a decent human being. On the way home that night, I asked him about the class. His reply, "I sure learned a lot of things about Martin Luther. One thing, his name is not Martin Luther King." We went back the next Wednesday with no complaints. Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for giving me us a church that loves our families. A church that cares for all. And thank you for steering us in the right direction with the children. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

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Faith in Action:

Conversion & Transformation

Written by Kerri Lawton

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

Exodus 32:9-11: "The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff necked they are. Now let me alone so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, and of you I will make a great nation. "But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, "oh Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?" I would venture to say the Lord our God has a bit of a temper. Moses had left those Israelites just long enough for them to cause trouble. Demanding an Idle God to be worshiped, not trusting their faith. One could say their conversion to foolish ways was wickedly guided. It's like the instant gratification we may all be guilty of obtaining. Moses pleaded with the Lord for the sake of his people. The descendants of Abraham and they have been promised so much from the Lord. Even God can transform for the sake of his people. He sets the example of how our own transformation towards God's goal of forgiveness and humanity, should proceed all else. Prayer: Lord, your guidance towards transformation, of what is expected of us, helps set our path through faith and trust. Praise to you on high. Amen

Thursday, September 8, 2022

Psalm 51:1-2: "Have mercy on me, oh God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." Oh, we all know this psalm and have spoken it in our hearts more times than we'd admit. We may try but there are times we don't

have the best interest of others before our own. Sinful thoughts creep in when we are angered. Uncontrollable urges that have become more of a habit. These words speak volumes, "have mercy on me, oh God! According to your steadfast love. "By the accounts written in scripture of steadfast love and forgiveness of sins, we are transformed again and again. We feel his love engulf us as we wash away our iniquities. Let his love wash over you as if in a refreshing shower, cleansing ourselves of the sins we are challenged with. Feel refreshed and renewed with his steadfast love transforming us daily. Prayer: Oh God, have mercy on us, we ask for your abundant mercy as we face challenges daily. Work through us, guide and strengthen us as we pray. Amen

Friday, September 9, 2022

Psalm 51:6-7: "You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." How beautiful are these words? We know God desires what is best for us and to mention "truth "is so meaningful. Truth to yourself, "your Inward being, "is often not so easy. We say we know our own hearts, but how often has your heart been swayed. We desire, as well as God, to have wisdom to know what is true; but the truth is is that only God can be so wise. We just have to continue, in our own wisdom, to allow the Holy Spirit to work through us. The Psalmist is speaking of being washed and cleansed again but we must feel cleansed internally, from within. Our spiritual beings need to be purged and cleansed as well. Open your hearts and minds and invite God's spirit in, converging your clean heart with his goodwill. Such a transformation could change your view of

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everything. Prayer: God of mercy, we pray to you with open hearts. May we be moved by the Holy Spirit, feeling your love and strength. Amen

Saturday, September 10, 2022

Psalm 51:10-12: "Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustaining me a willing spirit." This is definitely a favorite psalm. Plus I use my mother's Bible and this is boldly highlighted. My mother was a kind and God loving person and yet there were times even she had to be assured that God would not "cast her away. But the Psalmist's use of words is just perfectly phrased like "restore", "joy" and "sustain." I will relate it to the feeling you get when you've had a big argument with a loved one. You're hurt and yet fearful they may turn away from you for good. So, you work to "restore" the relationship, feel "joy" when you make-up and feel grateful that you have "sustained" the long time commitment to each other. The love we feel from God's acceptance is extended to others as we share the goodness and mercy he provides. Prayer: Oh, mighty God, keep me in a willing spirit, restoring my faith in your salvation. Transform me into a willing servant of your needs. "Create in me a clean heart." Amen

Sunday, September 11, 2022

1Timothy 1:15-16: The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as a foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who will come to believe in him for

eternal life. To the king of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only god, be honor and glory forever and ever." Paul speaks these words as a gospel truth deserving our full attention. It is a statement of great importance for our eternal destiny, and we believe it to be true in our own hearts. Christ was God in the flesh paying the price for the sin of fallen humanity. We ask for mercy for being the sinners we are and to transform ourselves into examples of true faith. We believe that through the Holy Spirit, our faithful hearts will guide us. The Holy Spirit works through us and through our actions, we experience conversion and transformation. As a young child slowly learns to walk, we take cautious steps pulling ourselves up when we fall. We have Christian family that can also help stand us up through faith. God works through us as we do God's work. Prayer: Merciful God, as you have shown us patience, allow us to have patience with ourselves and others. Be our guide and strength. Amen