

Sabbath Moments
A Service of Healing and Wholeness
Sunday, February 3, 2008, 6pm
Southport Presbyterian Church
The Toney Chapel

The Blessing of Encouragement

Death and life are in the power of the tongue. . . .

(Proverbs 18:21)

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us. Let each experience them accordingly. .

. . If [a person's gift] is encouraging, let him encourage.

(Romans 12:6, 8)

And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another. . . .

(Hebrews 10:24-25)

How many great artists would have never become so without an obscure master, whose name history has forgotten? The confidence shown in them by their master, quite as much as his teaching, has helped them give of their best.

(Paul Tournier)

It takes the gift of blessing [from others] to help us know who we are, and we need to know that before we can say where we are going. We can't otherwise recognize our destination if we don't know our destiny.

(Myron Madden)

I do not believe that we can put into anyone ideas which are not in him already. As a rule there are in everyone all sorts of good ideas, rather like tinder. But much of this tinder catches fire, or catches it successfully, only when it meets some flame or spark from outside, i.e. from some other person. Often, too, our own light goes out, and is rekindled by some experience we go through with a fellowman. Thus we have each of us cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flames within us.

(Albert Schweitzer)

The source of all such coming together is surely Jesus himself. Community is ever his gift. It was this way from the start. He formed the table fellowship. He sent his followers out not alone but in the company of one another. When he came upon them after the Resurrection, he joined two on the road, encouraged a frightened crew huddled behind locked doors, fed a hungry band of them at dawn on the shores of Galilee. He initially had drawn persons together and he continued to shape them as a body. When the Holy Spirit burned forth Pentecost, it settled not on one but on a whole assembly.

(Stephen V. Doughty in *Discovering Community*)

At this very moment when I write and at the very moment when you read these words, you and I are in the presence of the living Christ. To remember this truth is to be shaped constantly by the presence of God in Christ in our lives. We often forget this central truth of the Christian faith, and when we do, we are easily overcome by the troubles of the world. For me, what I write will pass before the eyes of the One about whom I write. As I write, I hope that my ordinary life and ordinary capacity will be energized, directed, and used by the One who gives me life and has called me to this ministry.... If I remember that I am not alone, but think, work, and live in the presence of the living Christ, I remain hopeful that even the most simple and ordinary task carried out in that presence and with the assistance of Jesus Christ is sacred, meaningful, and useful.

(Reuben P. Job in *A Guide to Prayer for All Who Seek God*)

Gracious God, I thank you for all of the people who through the years have encouraged me. May my gratitude be demonstrated through my own affirmation and support of others. Help me to understand that the fleeting words I speak today may lodge forever within the memory of my child, my friend, my neighbor. May my voice be an instrument of your peace, a messenger of your grace. May I choose my words as if they were precious possessions to be given wisely and with care. For in truth, O Lord, I have no gift of greater value than the words I say this day: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." Amen.

(Scott Walker in *Glimpses of God*)

Now I know that the Lord will help his anointed;
he will answer him from his holy heaven
with mighty victories by his right hand.
Some take pride in chariots, and some in horses,
but our pride is in the name of the Lord our God.

(Psalm 20: 6-7)

God be with you as you enter a new week.