

A Devotion for You--- Week of September 7, 2020

For God So Loved the World...

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for. 3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

I can count on two hands the number of movies I have seen in a movie theater. I'm a cheap date. This week Alice wanted me to see a movie called 'Inception' with Leonardo DiCaprio (the guy from Titanic). I don't have a science degree so I didn't understand all that was going on, but what I took away was how important our dreams are. Are there layers to our dreams? We know that it takes practice to remember them. We know they help us process things and we to dream for survival. I also took away that I do not understand 99% of the world God has created. (If you ever want to have a discussion with an atheist, ask them how much of the world they understand: 50%? 20%? 5%? Couldn't the reality of God be in that percentage you don't understand?) I think we are all going to be wildly surprised when we see heaven!

Then I was driving to a meeting this week and listening to the radio. I have 'old time' radio which is mainly Tejano and Hindi. I also have Sirius satellite radio. I began thinking about all that goes into my ability to listen to a song on either of the radios. The 'old time' radio can pick up signals for 30 or 40 miles. The satellite radio is broadcasting from... over 23,000 miles above earth! You could drive from Los Angeles to New York City and never have to change the station. That boggles my mind. Then I pick up my cellphone and remember there is more technology in the cellphone than we used to walk on the moon.

Our God is so much more than all of those satellites and the ability to launch them into space. So many times we put God in a box of limited possibilities; It doesn't limit God by any means, but it limits our faith and actually puts us in our own box.

Some church members had two very large Great Danes (Marmaduke). Whenever company came over, the family would put the dogs in an open room with only a one foot plastic gate keeping them in there. I asked, 'Um, don't they understand that they can easily step over that baby gate?' They didn't. Big, beautiful Great Danes behaving nicely but living the limits of their perceptions of reality.

What is more amazing is that our God did not stay in some otherworldly place. God chose to become one of us. He chose to cross the baby gate, so to speak to teach us there is much more to the story than we can understand now. We will celebrate God's choice to love us 'closer than a satellite signal' in 105 days at Christmas. Until then, know that a very big and very personable God who created all things loves you and says, 'You don't have to live your life behind the baby gate.'

Prayer: Dear God, it is so easy to feel powerless in our world. We can't seem to control diseases, economies, others, even ourselves. That leaves us both frustrated and anxious. May we be comforted by the sure knowledge that You are more than all these things, that you love us and forgive us and empower us. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

DEAR SERVANTS FAMILY, WE ARE PLANNING TO GO BACK TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4TH AT 10AM IN THE ACTIVITY CENTER. IF THIS CHANGES WE WILL LET YOU KNOW ASAP. WE WILL BE SOCIALLY DISTANCED. YOU WILL NEED TO BRING AND WEAR A MASK. WE WILL PROTECT ONE ANOTHER BY NOT HUGGING OR SHAKING HANDS NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE WANT TO. WE WILL HAVE LOTS OF GOOD MUSIC AND WE WILL HEAR GOD'S WORD. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS AS WE DO OUR BEST TO PROVIDE SAFE, SACRED SPACE TO ENCOUNTER OUR LIVING GOD!

Bulletin from Sunday, September 6, 2020

Praise

Scripture Romans 13: 8-12

Message Arise and Shine!

How do you like to wake up? Alarm? Phone? Which ringtone? I once found out why a certain hotel was practically giving away its rooms: The jackhammers and dump trucks cranked up at 6am outside my window... Personally, I like to wake up with the crows of roosters.

Paul really wants the church at Rome to wake up. Apparently they have come to know Christ but then returned to their selfish ways, thinking only of themselves.

Scripture is full of this call to wake up. 'Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.' (Isaiah 60:1)

The gospels also--- the parables of the wedding feast, the ten bridesmaids, the talents, and the unfaithful servant--- all deal with being prepared.

Within the history of America, there have been many calls to wake up. In the 1700's there came a time when there were more saloons than churches. Jonathan Edwards began preaching powerful sermons: he was short, spoke in monotone, and didn't use hand gestures. But God worked through him--- people clutched church columns in repentance.

Charles Wesley a sermon once from Ephesians 5:14 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' He said, 'Wake up! Everyone of you, wake up out of your dreams of worldly happiness. What is the state of your soul?'

We live with a set understanding of time: past, present, future. For God, time is different. 2 Peter 3: 8 'But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.' God's good kingdom 'is.' Whenever we practice love towards others, the kingdom breaks in to our present reality. Jesus healed, raised, restored people because that is the kingdom. Whether it looks like it or not, God is always working.

As we think about our loved ones, it is difficult to realize there will be a last phone call, a last text, a last hug. We don't want to take our loved ones for granted. We don't want to take our life of faith for granted either. Perhaps we need some waking up.

If the history of the universe was a 24 hour clock, humans arrived at 1 minute and 17 seconds to midnight. That should change our sense of time...

'Time is too short for those who wait. Time is too swift for those who fear. Time is too long for those who grieve. Time is too short for those who rejoice. But for those who love, time is not.'

Do you know what time it is?

Praise

Benediction Ephesians 3: 14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.