

February 19 2017

## **Scripture Lesson**

*Psalms 119:33-40*

*Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18*

*I Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23*

## **Sermon**      *It's All About God*

As you know, this may be my last Sunday to give a sermon for a while. I am not going anywhere but my role in the church will change. Next Sunday, we will hear Pastor Becky do the service and preach a sermon. Then it will be time for the potluck and a meet and greet before the congregation votes. So, with that in mind I want to say thank you to all of you for being so supportive of me in this journey we have had. I have enjoyed coming up with a message for you each Sunday, though I have to admit that some Sundays it was a challenge to figure out what the scripture from the lectionary was telling us. It has been quite an experience, one that will be a part of my life forever.

After reading the different scriptures that were recommended on the lectionary this week, I could have gone several ways. I was struggling with a title for the message and that sometimes was the hardest part of the whole service, when it came to me. "It is all about God." The scripture from Psalm 119 talks about the love that God has for us and how we are to love him back by loving our fellow human beings. It is about the same message in Leviticus. Verse 9 says "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest." By doing this you are leaving crops for the poor to harvest so that they might eat. The verses that follow have the same theme. By doing what is right for our fellow man, we are putting God first and taking care of our neighbor next. In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, it says that it all belongs to us and we belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God. So therefore, we belong to God. It is all about God, He is to be first in our lives.

My favorite scripture is Mark 12:30-31. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. 'The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself' There is no other commandment greater than these." God needs to be first in our lives and if He is then everything else falls in place.

I took time yesterday afternoon to glance over the messages that I have given since July of last year with a few that were given before then. It reminded me of the time I got on the stool and preached hellfire and brimstone, just for a minute or the time I held a bat in my hand and told the story of the batter for the home team in the last inning of the game. There was the story of the two farmers and how their lives were different depending on how they used the bounty of their crops that year. Although the stories were different and the scriptures they were based on were different, there was always a common theme. It is all about God.

One of the messages told the story of the potter and I had found a poem to go with that message. I would like to read that poem for you again.

From God's Hands

“It is not you who shape God; it is God that shapes you. If then you are the work of God, await the hand of the Artist who does all things in due season. Offer the potter your heart, soft and tractable, and keep the form in which the Artist has fashioned you. Let your clay be moist, lest you grow hard and lose the imprint of the Potter's fingers.”

Another message was about the shrewd manager, well, he thought he was shrewd. Part of my message from that day was the following: Bottom line is that God has to be first in our lives no matter what. Then we need to be stewards of all that is here for us on earth, being mindful of what is happening around us and to be ready to do what needs to be done. Remember, we as Christians are God's manager; we need to run His business wisely and responsibly.

Sometimes for us as humans it is hard to keep God first in our lives. We have all the distractions that a busy life can entail and when we are stressed, overtired, or even just distracted it is difficult to remember that God needs to be first in our lives. If He is, He will help us get over the bumps in the road that we encounter.

To switch gears a little, I had a request to do a sermon about smiling so I would like to touch on it for a bit. It was an interesting topic, we all know that a smile can make someone's day or brighten a room. But is smiling talked about in the Bible? Well, of course it is. So here are some of the scripture verses that relate to smiling.

Psalm 119:135 – Smile on me, and teach me your laws.

Psalm 31:16 – Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

Psalm 4:6 – Many people say, “Who will show us better times?” Let your face smile on us, Lord.

Job 9:27 – If I say I will forget my complaint, I will change my expression, and smile.

So to say it once more, put God first in your life. Remember, though, that if you don't it is not the end of the world, for we are humans after all. God will forgive you and your slate will be cleaned to start over again. Don't forget to smile, think about how it makes you feel when someone smiles at you, pass that on and smile first.

To me, Mother Teresa was the epitome of someone who put God first in their life. I will close with her poem “Do It Anyway”

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

It has been a good, run. Thank you.

