

The Disciple

JUNE 14, 2020

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Sermon for June 14, 2020

A Life that Counts

I can't take it anymore- the news. I don't watch the news anymore. And, I only read news articles that are more on the positive side. It seems like the news focuses on the negative. So much bad news about the virus. So much bad news about the evil in the world. So much bad news about violence, looting and rioting. More bad news about the virus. It never stops. At some point our minds become overloaded and we lose our ability to be empathic. We also become overwhelmed. Today's text couldn't be more relevant.

"Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord."

Philippians 3:1a NLT

The Apostle keeps reminding the people to have joy, no matter what happens. Paul may live, or he may die, but whatever happens rejoice in the Lord. Paul message seems to run in opposition to the news. How many headlines give us reasons to rejoice?

"I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith."
Philippians 3:1b NLT

When Dana reminds me of something several times, I realize that whatever it is- it must be important. Paul is saying here that what he wants us to know is so important that he doesn't care if he sounds like a "broken record". Something tells me that what he says next is worth our complete attention.

"Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh."

Phil. 3:2 ESV

Beware of the dogs! (Dogs were seen in a negative way in this era).

Beware of men who do evil! (That is harsh).

Beware of those who mutilate the flesh! (A terribly negative way to talk about circumcision I'd say).

Paul repeats the word "beware" so that it jumps off the page. It's as if he is holding up a "Beware of Dog" sign and jumping up and down. Apparently, some men are



*Whatever
you do, work
at it with all
your heart as
working for
the Lord.*

Colossians 3:23

coming, and they are extremely dangerous. Surely, there is a predator on the loose. Here is the background: Religious men would visit newly formed churches after Paul left. With their command of Old Testament and their impressive backgrounds, they would command the young believers to be circumcised: Your faith in Christ is great, but it is not enough, you lack one thing- you must be circumcised. Ha! This predator is after our faith- not just the Philippians, but yours and mine. Why is this so important? What does our faith have to do with joy? It seems that we think that faith in Christ is mostly relevant after we die. Paul couldn't disagree more. Our faith matters NOW in this crisis, in this time, during these headlines! However, a danger remains. The danger isn't the pandemic and it isn't the riots. The danger is the damage that can be done to our faith. Faith in Christ can bring us joy whatever happens if we take heed to Paul's warning.

“For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort...”
Philippians 3:3

The first thing Paul does to safeguard their faith is to let them know that if they have Jesus, they lack nothing. They can know they are Christians because they have the Holy Spirit and because their standing before God is not tainted by their own human effort but is based solely on their faith on what Jesus did on the cross. Then with a startling admission, Paul admits that he was one of the “dogs, evil doers or flesh mutilators”. Based on his privileges from birth and his human effort, his ranking was at the top. (Phil. 4:4-7). I guess you could say Paul was the “top-dog”. That was before he found Jesus. Now, he has a different approach to life.

“Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.”
Phil. 3:8-9

With all the best qualifications, Paul realized that his life didn't matter- it didn't add up to anything. His life didn't count. Now, he realizes that if he does a tally of all of the qualifications he brings to measure up, they are nothing but garbage. Does your life count? Do you find yourself at the end of a long day feeling like you really didn't accomplish enough to make your life matter or count? If so, that means you are close to the kingdom of God. Come inside the kingdom and you will see that there is joy no matter what happens. Quite counting the tasks and qualifications that you have and count the ones Christ has because they can take the place of your account. And since your account (and mine) add up to nothing, we have a great deal to be thankful for. Paul sums up a life that matters:

“I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead.”

Philippians 3:10-11

Paul knew that he belonged to Christ. He knew that everything that mattered in life had been taken care of by God through Jesus Christ. But he still didn't relax his faith. He wanted more of God. He found what mattered and threw himself into it like a tiny creek that runs into a mighty river. May you and I also be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of our own, but by faith, counting on the righteousness that we have received as a free gift through the work of Christ on the cross. Amen.

All scripture is from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Re-Opening

Sunday, June 21st
Please see note on next
page for procedures.



Zoom Bible Studies

Wednesday
10:30am

Thursday
7:00pm

Contact Pastor Vincent to get
the Zoom information.

Re-Opening Update

As our church leadership works towards our planned reopening on Fathers' Day weekend (Sunday, June 21), I want to take a moment to let you know all the steps that we will be taking to ensure the safety of our church family.

For starters, current guidelines limit the size of public gatherings, like church services, to no more than 50 people. Fortunately for us, we have measured out our available seating capacity and with some special adaptations (using the seating in the choir loft and the balcony), our little church can safely accommodate 51 individuals while still adhering to the 6' social distancing guidelines from our state health authorities. These same guidelines indicate that attendees from the same family or household can be seated together safely so when restrictions are eased, and the 50-person limit is raised, we will likely be able to accommodate more than 51 while still maintaining the requisite 6' distance between groups.

With the need to manage to a set capacity we will be taking a page out of the playbook of many other churches in our area and instituting a system for reserving your family's seats each Sunday. To make a reservation simply call or text message 540-748-0274 and leave a message indicating your intent to attend the upcoming Sunday service and how many people from your family will be attending. To allow our worship team time to prepare we ask that you make your reservation each week no later than 7pm on Thursday evening. We will only accept reservations for the immediately upcoming Sunday service and a call to make a reservation will be required each week (at least for now).

Once you have your reservation and are ready to attend church, we ask that you bring a couple of things with you. First, please bring your family Bible. To minimize inadvertent contact with contaminated surfaces we will be removing all hymnals and Bibles from the sanctuary. Hymnals will be replaced by printed lyrics in our weekly bulletin. The second thing that we ask is that you bring (and wear) a mask. In adherence with state guidelines and out of consideration for the most vulnerable in our church family, masks will be required attire for participation in our in-person services.

You will notice a few procedural changes when you attend on Sunday mornings. As an attendee you will be greeted at the door and an usher will escort you to your seat to ensure adequate spacing between seated groups. Given prohibitions on passing items between attendees, there will be no offering collected or communion passed during the service. Pre-packaged individual communion elements will be made available following the service and offering can be deposited in baskets by the door as people exit. Exiting after the service will be coordinated in a manner like the entry procedure, with an usher facilitating dismissal pew by pew.

As we adjust to this new process it is my expectation that the shared joy of our reunion will far outweigh any strangeness that may accompany these cautious first steps. If you have any questions about the details of these plans please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any of the other folks that assisted with drafting our reopening guidelines: Penny Best, Sharon Duke, Sheryl Eubank, Debra Hoyt, Vincent Klug, Ava Pippin, or Greg Strickland.

See you soon,

David Perkinson

*Not
Ready to
Attend
Services
Yet?*

**THAT'S
OKAY**

We understand and our efforts to provide Worship Resources at home will continue.

- Our Radio program will continue through July.
- This Newsletter will continue to be sent each week. Although the format may change slightly.
- The sermon will be recorded on Video each week and that will be available on the website.
- You will still be able to get worship resources each week on our website,

www.louisachristianchurch.org



SAVE this notice
for reference.

1. MAKE a Reservation (DEADLINE: Thursday @ 7PM)

Call or text message 540-748-0274 and leave a message indicating your intent to attend the upcoming Sunday service and how many people from your family will be attending.

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED EACH WEEK

2. BRING your own BIBLE.

There will be no hymnals or Bibles in the pews. Weekly Hymns will be printed in the bulletin.

3. WEAR a Mask.

Masks are required to attend services.

4. WAIT to be Seated

You (and your family) will be greeted at the door and escorted to your seat. Each person/group must be seated to maintain appropriate space between people/groups.

5. ENJOY your time in fellowship with each other.

The service will be a bit different. Because we are not permitted to pass items from person to person, offering and communion will not be a part of the service at this time.

6. DEPART with Joy. LEAVE an Offering. PICK UP Communion

Departing after the service will also be directed by the ushers. As you leave, you may drop your offering in the offering basket. You may also choose to pick up pre-packaged communion to take with you.

IT ALL STARTS WITH A RESERVATION.

Make yours by calling

540-748-0274

(Call or text—leave a message)

DEADLINE: EACH THURSDAY by 7:00 PM

STEPS TO FOLLOW
WHEN YOU WISH TO ATTEND
A SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICE

Call to Worship

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Gentle...yet powerful.
Lowly...yet almighty.
Shepherd...yet King.

In Your gentleness, guide us.
In Your power, strengthen us.
In Your lowliness, strip from us our selfish pride which only de-
stroys us.
In Your greatness, lift us up that we might aspire to greater
things.
As a shepherd, call us to be Your servants.
As a King, call us to be Your royal priesthood.

O God, who is our shepherd and our King;
O Christ, who was crucified and is now risen from the dead;
O Spirit, who comforts and empowers;
O great One in Three, Holy Trinity, this hour,
set us free to worship.



A PRAYER FOR YOUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

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to donate using a credit
card.

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P.O. Box 1344
Louisa, VA 23093

We thank you for
your support.

Hymn as Poetry

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

RAY PALMER, 1831

My Faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine!
Now near me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
Let me from this day
Be wholly Thine.

May Thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire;
As Thou hast died for me,
Oh, may my love to Thee
Pure, warm and changeless be,
A living fire.

While life's dark maze I tread,
And griefs around me spread, be Thou my guide;
Bid darkness turn to day;
Wipe sorrow's tears away;
Nor let me ever stray
From Thee aside.



Notes of **THANKS**

A big and warm thank you to our Music Team for supplying us with special music each Sunday morning since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The messages in song and instrumental music have been lovely and very meaningful.

All the team members have organized, planned, practiced and performed their duties well and I appreciate all the effort and dedication given to this task. Music is such an important part of the worship service and Louisa Christian Church is certainly blessed with willing and talented musicians. Keep up the good work and always keep a song in your heart.

Pat Purcell

*Hear Our
Sunday Service
on the Radio*



Real Faith
Today
Every Sunday
8:30 AM
WJMA
103.1 FM