

Sermon: November 30, 2008

“This is the Lord’s Table!!”

Ernie walks into the sanctuary ... just before worship starts on Thanksgiving morning ... all decked-out in his new suit. “Hey, Pastor Don ... how do I look? And look here ---- I have a brand new Bible ... want to see it?” Ernie is from St. Coletta’s ... and he’s excited that we are having church and then a nice turkey dinner for our developmentally disabled friends. “Ernie ... I love the Bible ... in fact, I’ll use it to read the gospel this morning.” He smiles.

My whole family --- Jude, the kids, grand-kids --- are all sitting in the front row. About five minutes into the service ... good ol’ Johnnie shows up ... plops himself down in the middle of the row ... right on top of our grandson ... “Hey, my name is Johnnie ... mind if I sit with you???”

Now, Phyllis ... our resident Baptist counselor ... she is over here with her group home clients. I’m making announcements about “stuff” coming up ... and she is already saying ----- “Amen, talk to me Jesus ...

I hear what you are saying ... AMEN.”

Our gentle Filipino PAQUITO is here, too ... with his entourage. We introduce them ... and “the other Johnnie” stands up and applauds himself ... proudly wearing his ever-present fanny-pack!!

During dinner ... Karen and Kathy are walking around ... displaying their new dresses and hair-styles. Trumane ... who has been coming here for 20 years and has never spoken a word ----- well, his plate, as usual, is stacked double-high with food!@!!

I look over Charter Hall during dinner ----- 60 so-called “disabled” adults ... just as many volunteers, trying to find something to do ... and I think to myself: THIS IS THE LORD’S TABLE!!

I remember, as a kid, being taught the meaning of Holy Communion by my pastor. He stood up in front of the classroom ... black suit and all ... chalk in hand ... using words like “transubstantiation” and “consubstantiation” ----- trying to get us to grasp how Lutherans and Catholics are different when it comes to understanding what Holy Communion means.

Well ... I wish he would have just stuck me into the middle of a room ... like we had this past Thursday ... and said ----- “Look at all these people gathered here today ... **this is what it means to be at the Lord’s table!!**

A place where you come to be affirmed.

A place where you come to be refreshed.

A place where you come to be reminded of what’s important in life and what’s not.

There are no divisions here ---- no Lutheran or Catholic, white or black, gay or straight ... no saved or un-saved ... just a bunch of “goofs” thrown together ... in place where our identity is grounded in the power and beauty and goodness of the human spirit.

You don’t have to qualify to be at the Lord’s table ... no classes, no “having to have all the answers.” Just “be.” Accept ... and love ... and care ----- THIS IS THE MENU.

You know the lessons of late have dabbled in the area of “the judgment day” ... Jesus coming back.

Today is no exception ... hopefully the lessons will “get better” next week!@!!

Anyway ----- all this “stuff” about being ready ... getting your house in order ... believing the right things ... because JESUS IS COMING BACK ... and you want to be on the “right side” when this happens.

You know? ... this is really a kind-of “spiritual terrorism.”

If we have to “scare” people into believing ... if we start “guilting” people into being a believer ... then we are heading down the wrong path.

Yes ----we should step back ... slow down ... and get our “spiritual house” in order.

We need to have solid priorities ... we need to use our times wisely ... we need to make good choices.

Our attitude ... our heart and soul ---- they need to be fresh, alive, and full of love & grace.

NOT BECAUSE Jesus is coming back Jesus is back ... always has been, always will be!!

Plus ---- we don't need to be afraid of Jesus!!

We need to have our "house in order" ... because you never know what you may be facing tomorrow.

What happens ... if tomorrow ... your doctor confirms what you've feared ----- yes, your dad
does have Alzheimer's??

What if your grandparents are the ones who were dining in that hotel in India ... where the terrorists attacked?

What about the decision whether or not to close the doors of your small business?

You could lose your job ... your child is in an accident ... you need to spend your days
taking care of your wife, living with cancer.

Our friend Kim unexpectedly goes back into the hospital ... Carol never expected to be
moving to Texas, following the death of her daughter.

THESE THINGS AREN'T A PART OF YOUR PLAN, THE BLUEPRINT OF YOUR LIFE.

This is not God's will.

This may not even be what God "wants" for you.

You realize ----- even God can't control this kind of stuff.

It's life. And ---- life is what it is!!

Some would say this is God "testing us."

God does NOT test us ... God does NOT play games with our lives.

Life tests us ----- everyday!!

You never know the day or the hour ... when we have to "rise up" and live life with new found courage & grace.

Each of us has a journey ... each of us has shoes & sandals to walk in.

Each of us has unique moments that test us.

And FAITH????? ... it's not about knowing it all. It's really not about "knowing" God.

Faith is more about letting God in.

A little surrender.

A little humility.

A bit of grace.

A dose of courage.

THIS UP HERE ... *is the Lord's table.*

I have no idea what tomorrow will bring ... but I do know this:

I won't walk it alone.

Neither will you.

Don Borling

All Saints Lutheran Church

13350 LaGrange Road

Orland Park, IL 60462

November 30, 2008

www.allsaintsjoy.com

allsaintsjoy@sbcglobal.net

708-448-2939