

Sermon: November 8, 2009
“The miracle of imperfection”

I love the gospel story this morning. It’s about giving. It’s about life.
A lady comes into the temple ... probably a bit embarrassed ... because she has so little. She puts two coins
into the offering plate. Jesus calls this to his followers’ attention:
*“Most people give out of their ABUNDANCE ... from what’s left-over. But this lady???? ... she gives out of
her POVERTY ... she gives it all!!”*

I want to be like this.
I look at who I am ... my life ... my job. I think of my family and friends. This morning ... I think of our
troops ... Fort Hood ... Afghanistan & Iraq. I think of Patrick Mackey, who died one year ago. I think of
Edwin Ryl-Kuchar and his family.

I walked out back this morning. Remember the movie ---- “Return of the Titans”???? The high school football
team ... where, for the first time, whites and blacks had to come together. Prejudice ran deep ... passed on
down to the kids from their parents. One morning at training camp ... the coach gets them out of bed at
4 in the morning. They run through the woods ... and then stop in the middle of what was once the battlefield
of Gettysburg. Dawn is breaking ... there is an amazing mist hovering over all the grave-stones.

The coach speaks with feeling:
*These fallen soldiers fought for you. That you one day would look beyond race and color ... and be united by
the very soul binding us together. Now ----- put your prejudice aside ... and BE A TEAM that cares for
and stands up for each other.*
This was one powerful moment!!

So, this morning ... I stand out back. It’s not Gettysburg ... it just All Saints Lutheran Church.
There is an amazing mist hovering over the bricks and trees and benches.
There is something amazing and eerie about death ... it somehow unites us and brings us together.
Yes, out back of our church ... in the silence of the mist ... like on the old battlefield of Gettysburg -----
there is no prejudice ... there is no judging ... no shame ... no angry words or walls or barriers ...
JUST A WHOLE BUNCH OF SPIRITS ... BEING SET FREE ... REACHING FOR
THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE.

What strikes me today ... as I think about life ...
I realize more and more ----- *how imperfect life is.*
Now, I can only speak for myself ... but ----
too often ... we try to come-off as being perfect. We try to come across as always “having it together.”
We want others to think we are always “in control” ---- of our own life, and even the lives of others
whom we love.
Yes, we want our kids to succeed ----- to make the right choices, choose the right friends, score well on
their tests. And even if you don’t have kids ... you have nieces and nephews and “little goofs” like the ones
who come up here for the kids’ sermons ----- you want them to be ok.
We have partners and boy-friends ... girl-friends & spouses ... step-kids and half-sisters yes, we want life
to be good and ok.

But life isn’t always the way we want. Each of us has imperfections and “demons” we deal with ... we have
our “issues” and our battles. So often we’re afraid to admit them or talk about them or share them ... for fear
someone may “judge” us or love us less or be disappointed in who we are.

Let us remember ----- *our imperfections, our battles, our short-comings, our tainted journeys ...*
it’s who we are,
it’s us!!

And just as death so often brings us together and slows us down to think & reflect ... so also ----- our imperfections & human battles can become the soil from which we & others learn about life and grow to be better people.

It's like the lady with the 2 coins.

“I may not have much ... but I give all of what I have back to you, Lord.”

All we have in life is our story.

All we have in life is our journey.

The mark of my journey and yours ... is not how perfect it is ... it's not how “successful” it is ...

The true mark of my journey is **how “real” it is.**

My journey is wrinkled and full of bumps ... but at least it can be honest and true. In the honesty of our imperfections we can find incredible power.

Twelve years ago a high school student came and talked to our youth group about what it's like to be an addict.

It was one of the most POWERFUL moments I've every experienced here.

This young man ---- Patrick ---- died last year at the age of 29 after a life of battling addictions and being bi-polar. Instead of running the other way and pretending ... Patrick's family stood tall ... and still stands tall today. Their hope? ----- that Patrick's journey and struggles can be a door to healing for others with similar battles to face.

I remember a Sunday years ago. After worship ... I heard this beautiful piano music in Charter Hall.

I hurry in to listen ... and there is high school student Edwin Ryl-Kuchar playing this beautiful classical music.

“Edwin ... I never knew you played the piano!@!!”

Edwin is a brilliant musician ... not to mention a very humble-and-tender young man.

As Eddie got older ... his music got better.

Also ... his private journey got tougher.

I am doing his funeral tonight ... he's only 36.

Eddie's family no pretending or denying here!!

They want this struggles to be honest and real ... so his life might bring hope & healing to others.

This is what Jesus teaches us.

This is what the lady with the 2 coins teaches us.

Yes ... all we have is our story and our journey.

It's Fort Hood.

It's Afghanistan.

It's Patrick and Edwin.

It's you & me ---- together.

Two coins ... and a whole lot of love.

Don Borling

All Saints Lutheran Church

13350 LaGrange Road

Orland Park, IL 60462

November 8, 2009

