

Sermon: April 25, 2010
"Mom, Dorcas, & finding Jesus"

This time of the year, I miss my mom a lot. It's been 25 years, since she died.
What is it? ---- post Easter? ... tulips coming up? ... the smell of lamb-gravy in the air???
My mom ----- she was SO LUTHERAN!! ...so simple ... so basic.
The classic "stay-at-home-mom" ----- packed your lunch everyday ... brought it to school when you forgot
it ... told us "how proud she was," even tho' I struck-out to end the game!!

Are any of you so "Lutheran" that you remember your church having "circles"???? These groups are named
after women of the Bible: Martha, Mary, Sarah, Ruth ...
My mom was the head of the DORCAS CIRCLE. Now ... being the mother of 3 boys ... she paid a high price
for being involved with a circle named "Dorcas."
"Mom, will you be at my ball game today?"
"I'm not sure, Donnie ... I am hosting the Dorcas circle today." (OH, PLEASE!@!!)

Thanks to the Bible lesson for today ... I finally know why she liked the Dorcas circle. "Dorcas" is the Greek
name for TABITHA ----- a female disciple in the early church ... noted for charity and good works.
The story has it ----- when she died, Peter performed a miracle and brought her back to life!!

Life is pretty basic ... and so is religion.
It's about taking "where you are" in life ----- right now. By the way ... "where are you" now????
When you get up and begin your day ... what is it that "defines" you???
Are you a Lutheran minister? ... somebody's secretary? ... a machinist? ... are you retired? ... looking for
work? ... more chemo and re-hab? ... are you a teacher? ... a bagger at Jewel? ... do you host the Dorcas circle?
Whatever you do ... wherever you are ----- THIS IS YOU!! IT'S YOUR LITTLE NICHE IN LIFE.
And ----- this is precisely where God walks with you ... it's where you meet his spirit.

I'm thinking this morning of a guy who gets my sermons in the mail. For some crazy reason, he continues to
want them ... even tho' he can't stand my theology. Maybe he has his own "Dorcas circle" ... and they sit
around and criticize what I believe!@!!
Anyway ---- he has "found Jesus" ... even tho' I never knew Jesus was "lost." He's constantly sending me e-
mails about how I don't know the Bible and how our "world is going down the tubes."

Finally I decided to e-mail him back.
"Bob ---- the bottom line is: WE ARE NOT ON THE SAME PLANET ... and, by the way ... you were
a lot more fun when you were a sinner!@!!"
When life isn't perfect ... when you "are just you" ... when you don't pounce on others' weaknesses ...
when you allow your humanity "to be your humanity" ...
when we look at ourselves honestly ... when we are free "to be" who we are ... it's here
that God's amazing grace abounds.

Each of us knows what it's like in life ... to face something over which we don't have control ...
*one of our kids, or cousins, or friends ---- he/she does something that's just plain wrong ... how can we help
them get back on track?
*when cancer ... or MS ... or Lou Gehrig's disease comes into your life ... when you face depression ... when
you have thoughts of taking your own life ... when you just want to "pinch yourself" and make all this
bad stuff go away ...
*when you wake up everyday with pain ... and it takes you 3 hours to begin walking on your own ...
THIS IS WHEN OUR HUMANITY is raw ... it's unedited ... and often the most real.
It's here that we know ---- it's only by the "grace of God" ... and lots of prayers ... and the power of love ----
that we can get through another day.

You don't need a preacher to remind you:

*There is nothing more powerful in the world ... nothing ...not one thing ... that is more POWERFUL
THAN THE GIFT OF LOVE!!*

Love doesn't make everything "right" ... any more than praying makes all our wishes come true.

But ... when you love, you don't have to hate.

When you receive love ... you don't have to give up.

When you believe in love ... you don't need to get angry or lash-out at others.

And prayer???

It's not about magic words ... or having to say the right thing ...

It's about BEING CONNECTED.

It's about facing an un-known future with COURAGE AND GRACE.

I'm rushing into Randy's Market. I'm behind ... I'm an "important person" with lots to do ... I am a
"legend in my own mind" ... I'm hassled and hurried ...

And just as I'm ready to pick-up my stuff and leave ... MIKE (the "big" bagger) ... he puts his giant paws on
my shoulders ... looks me in the eye: "REVEREND ... I AM PRAYING FOR YOU AND JUDE AND YOUR
FAMILY ... I REALLY AM."

Talk about "standing tall" ... talk about a voice of goodness from an ordinary guy!@!!

Angels come in all shapes and sizes.

Your size. My size. Mike's size.

We are at the Maggie Daley cancer center ...getting ready for Jude's journey of chemo.

It's been a long day ... we just want to get home. Then we hear those words: "Oh, just one more test!@!!"
This would be like me ... after the benediction ... and you are ready to get "out of Dodge" and on to the rest of
your day ... and I say: PLEASE STAY ... I HAVE JUST ONE MORE SERMON TO SHARE!@!!

I wait for Jude to get done with this "one more test" ... and out she comes ...with a lady named GYPSY
giving her a hug. You can just imagine what a lady named "Gypsy" looks like ..

Her voice booms out:

"Now don't you forget, girl ----- THE GOOD LORD IS WALKIN' WITH YOU.

*And ... with your husband by your side ... the Lord will lift you up and heal you. My prayers,
my Baptist church's prayers, my family's prayers ----- they are with you always."*

With people like Gypsy ... let's have a few more tests!~@!!

Gypsy.

Dorcas.

You and me.

And a God who never lets us go.

A pretty good team ... wouldn't you agree??

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