

Sermon: May 9, 2010 (Mother's Day)

"We just shook hands"

I had only been here a couple years. The "national church" was pretty much paying our bills ... then the time came when we "had to go it alone" ... now ----- where can we get a mortgage???

So, I make an appointment with the legendary George Gee ... at what was then called Orland State Bank.

Now --- it's Marquette.

They send me upstairs to his office. I'm wearing "slacks" and a black clergy shirt ---- I must have looked like a penguin trying to find a new home.

I sit down ... Mr. Gee looks at me: "You're certainly a young whipper-snapper!!"

What is a "whipper-snapper" anyway???

We talk about the church ... I share with him our situation. Is there a chance your bank can hold our mortgage???

He looks at me: I'll have to check with the board. (Which really means ---- I'll go into my office, have a cup of coffee, and think about it.)

Should I come back in a week or so???

No ... he replies ... I'll let you know in an hour.

An hour later, I'm back. He tells me ----- we'll be happy to hold your mortgage.

Are there papers to sign???

Eventually. For now ... let's just shake on it. You have my word.

I left the bank with the most powerful contract you can have: a man's word ... and his hand!!

We live in tumultuous times.

It's an amazing world. I look out the church door this morning ... the miracle of another sunrise.

I see the traffic going up and down LaGrange Road ... and I wonder: where are they going? To the hospital? ... to morning mass? ... re-hab or chemo? ... seeing their kids? ... are they having a good day or a bad day? ... going to see mom? ... going to the cemetery???

This "journey called life" is no picnic. It's a crazy mixture of miracles and challenges.

If there is one thing each of us needs to get through all this ... well, **it is trust.**

When I shook hands with Mr. Gee 35 years ago ... I believed him. He shook my hand, I shook his.

But today, TRUST ... it is breaking-down all over the place. From the clergy ... to those elected to serve us ... people on boards, supposedly being entrusted with our money ... even in families and friendships ... just trying to get a mortgage or a loan to buy a car ----- PEOPLE DON'T TRUST ANYMORE.

Life is all about trust.

We blow it sometimes ... we are human. We make promises and have good intentions ... and we often don't live up to them ---- it's part of life.

But ultimately: ***trust is an inside job.***

It's about trusting who you are. It's about believing in who you are. It's about knowing ----- when you are true to yourself ... when you are true to what you believe in ... when you have people around you in whom you can trust, whose word and soul is their bond ----- THIS IS WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT!!

How many of you know someone you love ... who has lost his/her way??

How many of you ... in this journey-called-life ... have had times when you have lost your way??

Your passion for living ... taking joy in simple things ... "the miracle of now" ... somehow, all this has lost its meaning and magic.

I think of Jesus' words this morning:

"PEACE I leave with you ... my peace I give to you. I don't give this as the world gives ... so, don't let your hearts be troubled ... do not be afraid."

When we are "at peace" with ourselves ...

When you TRUST who and what you are ...

When you have the peace of a humble carpenter in your heart ...
THIS IS THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL.

I was talking to someone the other day ... and she has lost her way ... at least for now.
In our world ----- we put such a premium on PERFORMANCE. What we do for a living ... our job and
position ... our test scores and how we compare to others ... there is too much pressure.
I've often said (much to the chagrin of over-achieving parents) ----- where we go to school ... what we
do for a living ... how much money we make ... **THIS IS HIGHLY OVER-RATED.**

LIFE is about your soul.

You may work at Speedway ... be a brilliant teacher ... you are a server at the Plaza Café ... you preach or sell
shoes ... clean the church ... you are a scientist ... 36 on the ACT, or a 16 ...
But ---- when you trust and believe in yourself ... when you have "the peace that the world cannot give" in your
heart ... when you live with goodness and joy in your step ...

It matters not what you do or where you work ----- **YOU LIGHT UP THE ROOM ... because
of the spirit you carry inside your heart. THIS IS THE MOST SACRED OF CALLINGS!!**

I think of my mom today. God bless her humble soul. So human ... she was. From her Dorcas circle Bible
studies to the "tub of love" she carried around everyday ... she always told me ----
There is only one thing I care about: *I want you to be a good person.*
Trust. Love. Your word is your bond.
Oh, there are times when I've let my mom down ... but the journey is worth it.

I was looking for some excitement in my life on Thursday ... so, Q and I went to a badminton tournament.
It's the sectionals at Sandburg next door. And the prize for winning? ----- being in the state
tournament next weekend. So, the stakes are high. One of our seniors – Brynn O'Brien – she is competing.
We walk into the gym ---- with badminton courts all over the place. 16 matches going on ... lots of intensity.
But ... something puzzles me.

I find Brynn's parents and ask: **WHERE ARE THE REFEREES????**

They respond: ***There are no referees ... the girls call their own games.***

Can you imagine this happening in boys little league baseball ... letting all those "nuts" call their own game???

I'm watching these matches ... so much at stake for them. The winners go on ... the losers are done.
I can't find one argument. No disputes. Lots of smiles, high-fives, congratulatory hugs ...
Trust ... fair-play.

On my way out ... I can't help but smile.
I'm thinking about life ... a young lady trying to find her way back.
I reflect on my own journey ... that of our family ...
I think about all of you.
The power of Jesus' word ... the binding trust of a handshake.
Yes, the world it nuts ... but ----- **THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE.**

*Don Borling
All Saints Lutheran Church
13350 LaGrange Road
Orland Park, IL 60462
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