

Sermon: September 26, 2010

“Weary”

Sometimes ... in life ... we just get *bone-dog-weary* ... whatever that means!!

We all know what it's like to be physically weary.

Trying to do too much.

Trying to be all things to all people.

Not just living your own life ... but trying to live someone else's. Why do we do this???? ... you can't live another person's life!!

It's another trip to chemo. ... taking care of aging parents and kids who still depend on you.

Arthritis ... depression ... something you have to live with everyday.

We all have times when we can get so burdened ... we just want to curl-up under a blanket ... and let the world kind-of pass us by.

I was talking to one of our members the other day ... she hasn't been to church in a long time (and --- she has lots of company). I could hear the sadness in her voice:

*“I wake up on Sunday morning ... I know I should go to church ... but Sunday is the only day I can wake-up ... and I'm not already behind schedule by 6:30 AM. I'm so tired ... I can hardly move.”*

Too bad. Life shouldn't be this way.

There's another kind of weariness, too. “Spiritual weariness.” It's an inside-thing.

The world makes us anxious. We worry about “stuff” we can't control.

Going to church becomes just one more thing on a long list of things to do.

What you don't like about your religion out-numbers what you do like.

This is when religion ... instead of building you up ... it takes you down.

Lots of guilt ... lots of feeling like you are always falling short.

Well, “Bunkie” ----- this ain't good!!

There is a lot of ceremony and ritual in religion. I think of last week ... when 18 of our young people were confirmed. Just today ... 5 “little kids” are being baptized.

True ----- we often judge the church by how much “stuff” is going on and how many people show-up.

But ----- underneath all these ceremonies ... underneath all the statistics and obligations ...

*there is a humble carpenter ... who reaches deep within our souls ... and, in so many words, invites us to be at ease ... and to relax ...*

Jesus says ----- I am here, as your Lord and savior ...

to build you up ... and to hold you in the palm of my hand.

In life ---- there is a lot to feel guilty about. We all fall short. And there are times when the church ... in all its humanity and shortcomings ... can make things worse.

But we are here to let you know: GOD LOVES YOU. GOD WILL NEVER LET YOU GO.

It's ironic ... isn't it? ... how sometimes just one “little thing” can put you over-the-edge at the end of a long day. There are so many people in our lives ... who really don't know us ----- from the inside out.

Last weekend I had a wedding down the street ..... at the ever-festive Orland Chateau.

An older couple ... older than me!@!! I'm talking to the groom just a few minutes before “tip-off.”

He looks at me ... a bit askance!! Now --- I think I'm lookin' ok. I have my dress jeans on ... knit shirt ... dark socks and almost-new loafers. My Norm Van Lier double-breasted sports coat.

He says: “Are you going to marry me in those clothes???”

After a long day ... one of those where very little had gone the way I had hoped ... this was the last comment I needed to hear. So, I look at him and respond:

*“Howard ... if I re-call ... you are the one who came to me ... asking if I would do your wedding. Everyone else you asked said NO. I didn’t solicit ... nor do I need your business. I’ve been dressing like this for 37 years ... and I haven’t been kicked-out of my church yet!@!!”*

After the wedding ... I ask him ----- “how did I do????”

He smiles. I went home and had a beer.

One of the things that can wear us down the most ... is when people don’t want to know us “on the inside.”

They want us for what we can do for them ... and that’s where it stops.

You cook and you clean.

You get up and go to work everyday.

You are a care-taker and a home-maker.

You battle and live ... and battle some more.

And all we want in life ... once-in-a-while ... is to be appreciated for who we are on the INSIDE.

We want people to see our soul and feel our spirit.

This morning our lessons are about being rich and poor. We can be rich & poor at the same time.

Often when we are weary ... that’s when we feel poor.

When we are strong ... well, it’s easier to be rich and giving.

Did you see the “feel good” story the other day in the Sun-times????

It goes back to a tragic event ... where two young kids are seriously burned in a fire that was deliberately set.

Many surgeries for these two innocent and beautiful kids: they have to wear masks ... they can’t go many places ... sometimes other kids make fun of them.

A man and his wife read the story ... they don’t know them. And what do they do????? ----- they pay to send the entire family to Disney World. They wanted to be anonymous ... but the family almost insisted on telling others who these “angels” are.

OK ---- most of us don’t have that kind-of money to do this.

But ----- you have a journey ... and so do I.

We may not have a lot ... but we can give ... we can share ... we can give out of our abundance, or out of our poverty ..... BUT ---- WE NEED TO GIVE!!

I’m thinking of a song ... “I am weak, but thou art strong.”

I’m thinking of Jesus’ words ... “come to me, you who are weary and heavy laden ... and I will give you rest. My yoke is easy, my burden is light.”

Yes, life is full of burdens.

But ... when it comes to religion, the church, and your spirit ----- the yoke needs to be light.

When we believe in a loving God ... it is!!

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