

Sermon: November 6, 2011
"The blueprint of RESPECT"

40 of your kids went to the Ronald McDonald House last weekend. Gail and Andy were overwhelmed. They lived there for quite a while when their daughter Drew was at Hope Children's Hospital. It's been two years since little Drew left us. After last Sunday ... Gail tells her mom and dad ---- "I know what our church stands for ----- ACCEPTANCE OF EVERYONE ... SERVICE TO ANYONE."

There is no "blueprint" for being Lutheran.

Religion is about being a good human being being decent, caring, accepting, giving.

This isn't Christian or Jewish or Islam or Hindu ... or any other brand.

This is what I like about being here. We come here from all over ----- religiously, politically, personally ...

And yet ---- it doesn't get in the way of what we celebrate together.

Friday nite ... 37 of your kids are sitting around the campfire. I ask each one of them ---- "What is it that makes you unique ... and who is it that gives you the courage to be TRUE TO YOURSELF???"

Whoa!@!! ---- talk about deep ... and rich.

And HOW DO THESE KIDS GET THIS WAY?????? ... WHERE DO THEY LEARN THIS???

From you.

From all of us.

Kids watch us ... they learn from us. They watch us succeed ... they watch how we handle failure.

The most important text book they read is THE TEXT BOOK OF EVERYDAY LIFE!!

You can go to church everyday study the Bible 'til your shoes fall off ... you can "say and do" all the right things. But let us remember ----- *God's spirit lives inside the soul of each one of us ...*

Jesus' sandals walk in our hearts."

I've been thinking and praying a lot ...

By the way ---- did you see the sunrise this morning? ... what a gift!@!!

How can people become so hardened? ... having no regard for human life????

How can any adult hurt a child?

Why would you want to be a terrorist? ... how can you hate? ... be so angry???

I guess they just haven't had the right teachers!! Maybe they just don't want "Jesus to come alive" in the moments and places around them!!

It's hard to know God's love ... if you aren't surrounded by love.

It's hard to know a forgiving God ... if you haven't been forgiven.

Around here ... we don't demand a lot from our kids. Sunday School is fun ... no homework in confirmation.

But ----- there is one thing WE DO DEMAND ... **RESPECT.**

Respect begins in the very fiber of your soul.

Respect is at the heart-and-soul of those we remember on this "All Saints Sunday."

When I hear my mom's and dad's and brother's names ... I am reminded again and again ----

they were all about respect.

My dad quietly made it very clear to me ---- every person deserves a chance.

When you walk by someone ... in the locker room, at 17th and Ashland, in aisle three of the Jewel ... you nod, you say "hello," you acknowledge their presence.

Why we would ever do anything, anytime ... to hurt an innocent soul ---- it's beyond me.

It hit me the other day. Jude and I hang with our Q quite a bit. He has been to more places that he has never wanted to be with us!@!!

He makes friends at wakes and funerals ... in hospital waiting rooms ...

Anyway ---- the other day Q and I go to the post office. Like most young kids ---- Quinton is a patriot!@!!

He loves his country, his president ... he marvels at soldiers and police and fire-fighters in their uniforms.

Like our youth say every time we pray ----- "we love the troops!!"

On the sidewalk ... right outside the post office ... a man is carrying a sign ----- making our president look like Hitler. Next to him ---- a lady with a sign ... the words I would not repeat here.

The look in Quinton's eyes almost made me cry.

"Dad ... why is he doing that???? How come people have to be that way???"

I could see and feel the hurt in his soul.

Quinton is an innocent kid. He doesn't know politics ... he's not a Republican or Democrat ... he doesn't vote ... he just loves and cares, without condition or pretense ... like most kids.

INNOCENCE IS SUCH A PRECIOUS GIFT.

Sure ---- we can't protect it forever ... and it can get lost ...

But it's such a beautiful gift.

It's innocence ... allowing us to dance in the rain.

It's innocence ... inviting us to live with hope.

it's innocence ... challenging us to "take the high road" ... even tho' it gets dizzy up there sometimes.

Let us never forget ... our kids are watching.

Our kids are learning.

We are life's teachers ... we are life's rabbis.

Our souls and actions are the very streets upon which Jesus walks today.

JESUS LIVES INSIDE THE SOUL OF EACH OF YOU.

*It's a gift.

*It's a calling.

*It's a responsibility.

Most of all ----- it's an honor.

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