



Daily Meditations

January 06-11, 2020

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 2 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Dave Boyd, Becky Denton, Pat Gillory, Traci Maxwell, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, T.Cay Rowe, and Carroll Wilson.

Click on the scripture reading for each day to go directly to link.

COLLECT, CHRISTMAS 2:

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Seasons of the Church Year

Epiphany, January 6, 2020

Revelation 21:22-27

"And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light..." - Revelation 21:23-24

Far too often we go through the seasons of the church year without giving much thought to the symbolism behind them. In Advent, we have been waiting in expectant darkness for the Light of the world to come. At Christmas the Light arrives with the birth of Christ, but it is only seen by Mary and Joseph and a few shepherds. But today is Epiphany, and the Light bursts forth for all the world to see. As Isaiah put it (60:1-3): "Arise, shine! For your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you...Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn." John, the author of Revelation, tells us that the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, "has no need for sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its light is the Lamb."

Or as Hank Williams sang it, "Praise the Lord! I saw the Light!"

Simpler and more Complicated than that

Tuesday, January 7, 2019

Colossians 1:1-14

"...we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God." - Colossians 1:9-10

How often have we heard it said that we should discern God's will and follow that, as if God has a very specific plan in mind for each and every situation and it's up to us to puzzle it out.

Episcopal priest Frederick Schmidt in his book, *What God Wants for Your Life*, suggests that the process is both simpler and more complicated than that. Schmidt suggests that to follow the will of God is simply to follow the command that Jesus gave in Luke 10:27: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

But some may say that leaves unanswered the question of what specifically we should do in a particular circumstance to carry out God's will. But Schmidt suggests that *there* is where our free will and creativity come into play. We should ask ourselves whether or not the action we're considering carries out Jesus' command of love. That considering gives us the answer to whether we are indeed following God's will...so simple, and yet so difficult!

What if Christ is...?

Wednesday, January 08, 2020

Colossians 1:15-23

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created...For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross." - Colossians 1:15, 19-20

Paul's image of Christ given here is the highest, most exalted description of him to be found in the New Testament. What Paul is describing here goes far beyond our simple understanding of Jesus as a simple Jewish rabbi who lived in Galilee, ran afoul of Roman imperial oppression and was crucified for it. In his new book, *The Universal Christ*, Fr. Richard Rohr uses this passage from Colossians to ground a sweeping set of questions that expands our understanding of who Christ was and is:

- What if Christ is a name for the transcendent within every "thing" in the universe?
- What if Christ is a name for the immense spaciousness of all true Love?
- What if Christ refers to an infinite horizon that pulls us from within and pulls us forward too?
- What if Christ is another name for everything--in all its fullness?

Intrigued by these questions? Then join us as we read this book together and struggle to understand the impact of its expansive understanding of Christ in our lives. We meet Sundays at 9:15 a.m. and Tuesdays at 10:45 a.m. at St. Stephen's.

Mystery of Love

Thursday, January 9, 2020

Colossians 1:24-2:7

"To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." - Colossians 1:27

Have you ever considered yourself to be the revelation of a mystery? Well, according to Paul, you are. How humans could participate in a life with God was a deep mystery until Jesus came to show to all how it could be done. The key to this mystery is love. We are all living, breathing examples of the generous inclusivity of God. We are called to reflect that same love back to the world. We need to recognize that every person we meet bears a blessing for us from God, and it is up to us to receive that blessing and then pass it on.

The "Style" of Worship

Friday, January 10, 2020

Colossians 2:8-23

"Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch." All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings. - Colossians 2:21-22

Apparently, there was a great deal of controversy and argument in the ancient church at Colossae over the "right" way to do worship. Looking back over the history of the church from the beginning until now, many of the disagreements, schisms, and even wars were fought over the "style" of worship. Most of that missed the essential point.

When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:23), she tried to draw him into a distracting argument over whether to worship on Mt. Zion or Mt. Gerazim. But Jesus kept the focus on the one important thing: "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him."

Or as Jack Palance told Billy Crystal in the movie *City Slickers*, "The secret to life is just one thing...just one thing. Find that one thing, and nothing else matters."

Profound Wish

Saturday, January 11, 2020

Colossians 3:1-17; Galatians 3:23-4:7

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful." - Colossians 3:15

Especially in this Christmas season, there are no words I can add to this profound wish from Colossians: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...and be thankful.

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