

Sunday Morning Worship at Brentwood, Nov 27, 2016

Notes for the sermon Get Ready! (Advent 1)



Ps 122 and Matt 24:36-44 Sermon Text = Matt 24:44

***Therefore you must be ready, for the Son of Man
Is coming at an unexpected hour.***

[Hymns = 84, 110, and 119 in the *Book of Praise*]

Key Ideas

1. I can only imagine what it is like to get ready for a birth – imagine that the time of waiting, between conception and birth, fill with great excitement, great joy, and great anxiety – all of those emotions swirling around as you try to make sense of what is coming, of how to best nurture this new life as it grows, of how to be greet this new life as it is born, of how to be nourish this new life as it grows, of how to let this part of you go as they take the gifts you have given them into a dangerous world – these strike me as questions worth considering this Advent season – as we begin a year of digging deeper into Matthew’s version of Jesus’ work and witness – read quote from NT Wright in this week’s Memorize and Ponder – with us in and through the pain of birthing a new world as friends and followers of Jesus, the Christ
2. I think such readiness, with all its complex and, at times, confusing feelings and thoughts, requires the kind of resilience outlined in the insert in your bulletin this morning and attached as an appendix to these notes – there are 10 attitudes and behaviours identified by the American Psychological Association as the most effective ways of building resilience – I’ve put a Christian interpretation on them – I see them as ways in which the gifts of Holy Spirit guide and strengthen our lives in dangerous times, such as those of Matthew’s readers and of us – the key ones for me in terms of readiness to follow Jesus are - #7 Nurture a positive view of yourself as a beloved friend of Jesus Christ - #9 Maintain a hopeful outlook, trusting that God is in charge – and #1 Make connections with people in ways that bless them

At this point in our ponderings, then ...

Let’s go back to our Psalm this morning and recall the verses that we used as a Call to Worship – they talk of a peace within us that give us the strength to seek good – that peace, though it really does our pass understanding in many ways, is the source of our resilient readiness in this time of waiting for the final realization of God’s Commonwealth – the hour may be unknown and come in unexpected ways at unexpected times – but the deep peace and joy of the community that is God is known and grows as we get ready for Emmanuel – God with us – such a simple but powerful reality in which to flourish

Sermon notes of Rev Dr Brian Fraser,
Minister with Brentwood Presbyterian Church, Burnaby, BC

Generating the Resilience to Flourish in the Christian Faith

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, and significant sources of stress. It involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. Here's 10 ways the Holy Spirit helps us practice resilient hope.

1. Make connections with people in ways that bless them

Establishing good relationships with others, to both help and be helped, strengthens resilience. The foundation of this ability, of course, is your relationship with God in Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. Reconciled to God as child and friend, we are empowered to connect.

2. Don't view crises in life as insurmountable problems

You choose how to interpret and respond to the things that happen to you. You can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, see anything as an opportunity to grow in your faith.

3. Accept that change is a part of life

Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on the circumstances you can change. Find positive potential and pursue it.

4. Do something to move towards realistic goals, one step at a time

Ask yourself "What's the one thing I can do in this moment to move forwards in fulfilling my calling to be a blessing in Jesus Christ?"

5. Take actions that are decisive, consciously choosing to use your gifts

You always have the freedom to decide how to use your strengths and talents in the service of Christ's kingdom. Use that freedom to flourish faithfully.

6. Look for opportunities to grow in your appreciation of life in Jesus Christ

Enjoy the teachable spirit God has given you in Christ, exploring with the Spirit all the positive possibilities that exist in the midst of challenges and crises.

7. Nurture a positive view of yourself as a beloved friend of Jesus Christ

We were created in God's image, male and female, to be a blessing in God's name. Accept the dignity of that calling and live with confidence in your God-given abilities to overcome the barriers to flourishing in the faith.

8. Keep things in their proper perspective, trusting God's providential care

Even in the face of painful events and fearful feelings, remember God's providential care and don't blow problems out of proportion.

9. Maintain a hopeful outlook, again trusting that God is in charge

A hopeful attitude helps you provoke love and good deeds. (Hebrews 10:22-23) Try visualizing the good you want to accomplish rather than worrying about what you fear.

10. Take care of yourself, working with God in the whole process of growth

Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Nourish your body, mind, heart, and soul. God wants you to take care of your whole self so you are strong in being a blessing in situations that require resilience.

Based on the American Psychological Association's 10 ways to build resilience. Find out more at <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>.