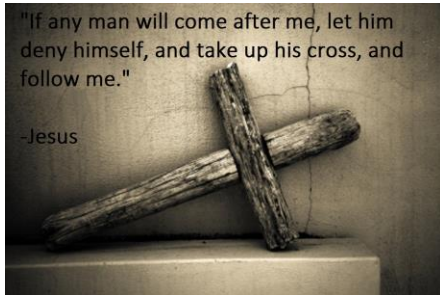


What Kind of Life Does Christ Give?

Sermon Notes for Sept 3, 2017 at Brentwood

Ps 26:1-8 & Matthew 16:21-28



**The Jesus told his disciples,
"If any want to become my followers,
let them deny themselves and take up their cross
and follow me."
(Matt:16:24)**

Provocative Ponderings that Call Forth Our Potential in Christ

- I woke up this morning thinking of the French philosopher and theologian, Paul Ricoeur and of Evadne's mother, Roslyn Brebner – the thread that connected these two very different people was the idea of a simple faith – not simplistic – not with those two – but simple – profoundly, surprisingly, astoundingly simple – Ricoeur used complicated ideas and words to talk about a 'second naïveté' where we come to see love as the simple core of human flourishing – Mrs B just loved everyone she met - it is in the wit, wisdom, and workings of that simple faith that Christ gives us new and constantly renewed life – our flourishing is rooted in that simplicity of love – I think that's what Jesus is getting at in our text this morning – when our core identity is shaped by the story of this perceptive peasant preacher, in whom God is revealed most clearly, then we are being nourished in the simplicity of love – that is our way of life – it's that simple and that profound
- Seen through that kind of lens, what about denial, the cross, and following Jesus?
 - What Jesus wants us to deny is the self that has rebelled against God and gotten stuck in the dysfunctions that come from trying to go it alone – it's the arrogance that thinks that I know best, that I've got all the capability within myself to live a good life – it's to make a god of ourselves, either individually or collectively – if we're going to follow Jesus, we have to acknowledge the simple fact that God has priority – we are creatures, not the Creator – we have a contribution to make, not control to impose
 - What God does on the cross – yes, that was God up there, dying the slow, agonizing death of a despised criminal – what God does on the cross is to reconcile this rebellious species of ours, all of humanity, back into the possibility of a right relationship with him, with each other, and with our authentic selves, the selves God made us to be – we were so stuck in our

Notes for a sermon preached by Brian Fraser,
minister with Brentwood Presbyterian Church, Burnaby, BC

rebellion through the generations of trauma that our species had caused that we could not help ourselves – God stepped in and did what needed to be done for us – that simple act invites eternal gratitude

- The earliest Christians were known as those who followed The Way – it was a way that accepted grace with gratitude, that loved the unlovely, and that saw an instrument of cruel domination transformed into an act of reconciling forgiveness from which flowed a flourishing life

At this point in our ponderings, then ...

In and through Jesus, the One anointed to accomplish what God wants to see happen in his beloved creation, we are given and invited to use the power of love as our way of life – one of the ways in which God has fed the church with this love over the generations is the supper we will enjoy this morning – it's a simple supper – wine in a very early stage of fermentation and bread – but it's nourishment in profound, feeding us in Jesus' way of love