

Rev. Todd Hoeffs

Gathering the Scattered Youtube COVID message

3rd Sunday after Pentecost (series A)

Scripture: St. Matthew 10:24-39

Father's Day Farewell [Last sermon for Lutheran Church of the Redeemer Winnipeg]

The Lord be with you.

The message for today, which is the 3rd Sunday after Pentecost and Father's Day, is from St. Matthew's Holy Gospel chapter 10 -- 24 "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; 25 it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! 26 "So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. 27 What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. 28 Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 And even the hairs of your head are all counted. 31 So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. 32 "Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; 33 but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. 34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 and one's foes will be members of one's own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. This is the Gospel of the Lord.

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

10 years ago on Father's Day I received this painting from my awesome wife.

She designed and painted it herself.

It reads — "You could train a monkey to do my job " This line was a long running joke we laughed about for years.

I've kept it in a prominent spot in my church office. I always laugh out loud when I read it.

Besides enjoying how it looks,

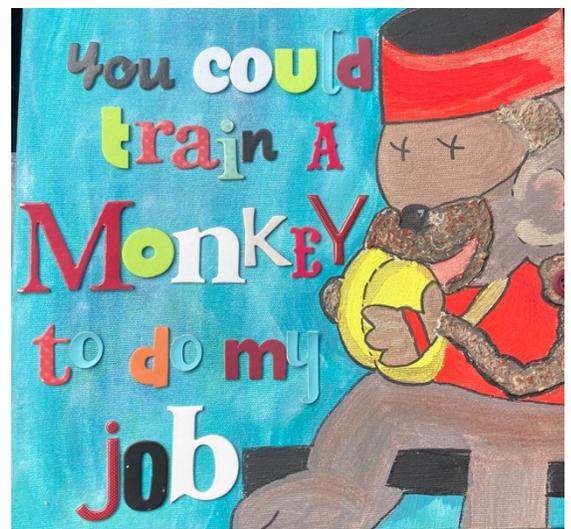
There's one really good reason why I love this so much...

This saying teaches me HUMILITY.

Something we pastors really need to remember.....

Fathers, men in general....need humility.

Often.



In fact ALL PEOPLE need to be humbled.
To not think more of ourselves than we should.
While we all have certain talents, abilities & gifts
As well as our identity
with a vocation & a place in this world & in our families.

None Of us are irreplaceable.

None of us are so valuable that life can not go on without us.

And yet we are of incredible value to God.

That's His amazingly wide welcome of grace.

For He loves all whom He has created.

Which is also very humbling.

Such is the need for humility.

Realizing our place before God and each other.

That because of what our Lord has done for us,

We are moved to be used of God, as one in service to all others.

Father's Day teaches us this humility.

Our own ability to love

To Care

Our skills

Are all imperfect.

We have a unique role to play as fathers...

To be there

Show up

Be present as we're present

To Guide

To Encourage

To support

But dads are only as good as the heavenly dad Who showers our lives with strength & compassion.

While we may think we "know" more than past generations, none of us are better.

Disciples aren't above their teachers

Slaves are not above their masters.

Now don't think this is a Biblical proof text to have slaves.

Unfortunately, slaves were a societal reality in the ancient times.

The Romans and many other cultures kept slaves.

God's command to not kill is proof enough that owning a person as property is wrong as it steals another's life & reduces them to an object.

But being a slave of the Lord is really living under Him and His Kingdom in perfect freedom.

We are His servants

His brothers and sisters,

His people.

And yet we are not chained to Him

We are united to Him in His life for the transformation of our lives.

We are not above Him.

It's enough that we're like Him.

And we are.

Because of God's gift of our faith by His Word and Baptism.

Baptism actually washes away the sin chains that bind us tightly to our own way,
Washing us into Christ, bathed in His Blood, cleansed and made new.

Denying our self

Denying our ego

Denying our need to be arrogant

Taking up the cross

Taking up Jesus' path of suffering

Following

Humbly submitting to Jesus' way

Which has a huge cost

If the religious authorities then called Jesus a demon, (Beelzebub)

why would they treat his followers any better?

We will be attacked for what we believe and how we show compassion.

We will get strange looks if we help people others deem unworthy

We will be in a new Christ-like lifestyle which wisely calculates the cost of earthly things
& by the Spirit's renewal instilling in our hearts and minds a more valuable way

A way which helps

Serves

Listens

Gives.

We've nothing to fear!

A giving faith is a Christ-like faith

We are not above him

We are IN Him.

Because He is in us

We give witness to his life in our lives

We don't hide it

Or ignore it

And hopefully we don't neglect it

It promises to remain a well grounded, deeply nourished treasure inside

And others will notice

Be ready for that

Questions will come

It's not me, it's Christ in me

Don't fear telling others those things

Don't fear being vulnerable to self and strong in Jesus

Don't fear encouraging others

Don't fear coming from a place of mercy & understanding

It's not weakness

It's the Spirit's power

In Christ we stand.

In our lives Christ is recognizable, even if we don't see it.

Quite a few years back my dad visited my family.

He came to church where I lead the service.

As all worshippers were exiting and shaking hands, greeting me,
My dad came through.
Had a tear filled smile.
Shook my hand firmly and said: "good job preacher".
High praise indeed.
We often don't get compliments with such meaning from our parents.
I wasn't just Todd, but a pastor to him.
That is also very humbling.
Faith recognized the gift
The gift of God's love in Christ given out in church service
Jesus gifts of life and faith can't be denied
We know they keep us connected to our Lord
When we're called,
We're called to enter into Jesus' embrace of death 1st before we enjoy life.
To let evil die, get crushed, that is so needed
We can't deny that.
It's our reality as Jesus' disciples
To deny it is rejecting it
Acting like it doesn't exist
That Jesus doesn't exist
That his cross didn't matter
It did.
It does
It's the way to keep your life
To truly live
To let your sin die
Why wouldn't we!?
Don't we hate our sin?
No
We love it
We love sinning because it's what we know
It's dyed into the fabric of our being
It needs to die
Be cut away
Washed away
For the Gospel growth to transform us
Make us more like Jesus
Which is what we dads need
Less of me
more of Christ
More of others
Worry about your self -- last
Because you and I can trust that our Heavenly Father has our backs
He takes care of you
HE's got the whole world in His hands.
If he loves 2 little sparrows, He's definitely got you covered.

That's the Gospel Treasure!

Total undeserved grace

Mercy

Peace

Forgiveness

Transformation.

Renewal.

LIFE. Real life. God's Life. Never ending new life His life gives us the power to LOVE properly.

Our families are such a gift worthy of love.

We must not LOVE them, sacrifice all we have for them

Not Above our love for God,

Or before our love and devotion for Jesus,

For His disciples, His believers LOVE God with our whole being

Because God in Christ has chosen to love us 1st.

Its from that LOVE flows our ability to properly love our spouses and children and families.

Other wise we can only love selfishly.

Otherwise we'd only love to be loved in return.

By losing our need to control love, we gain the love of our God and each other's love.

A giving love

A love which never counts the cost.

That's a parents' love.

A Dad's love.

A love which follows in faith.

What a gift to give the world

A Christ-like way to embrace others, as they are, with peace and hope.

This too builds within us a sense of place, identity and humility.

While we aren't irreplaceable,

We are all valuable.

Valuable because of Christ Who is in us

And the uniqueness with which our God made us.

I close with a quote from a familiar childhood hero MR ROGERS—

“Unless a child [or a person] is accepted just as they are, they will never be able to grow.” How true this is. Once accepted, the faith and courage to grow begins.

And we can grow & develop walking humbly with our God as we walk humbly with our fellow human beings.

God accepts you as you are

You are His child.

You are loved by Him.

You are loved to love Him and others. A message for Dads.

A message for all people.

A humbling message.

Amen.

Let us pray.

Jesus Christ, we pray for dads, uncles, grandpas, cousins and all the men who parent us in so many unique and wonderful ways. As our Heavenly Father not only inspires our dad qualities but is truly a giving God supporting us all the day long of our lives, may we be Christ-like examples of peace and mercy to the world. Be with all those who struggle with parenting or who have negative views of dads. Wipe away the tears of those mourning the loss of a father. Comfort all who are ill from COVID or any affliction. May all people see each other through your sacrificial lens of the cross so that racism, discrimination and violence may cease. Instill hope with in us that by our Baptism and faith we may mirror to the world your way of giving up our own needs in humility for the sake of all others, that all may be brought to your father's throne; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen.

Today also marks my last message
as the pastor of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Winnipeg, Manitoba.
We've had 8 years of ministry together.
A time of vision, creativity, growth with new faces entering into the Redeemer family.
We pastors never say goodbye, as we know & trust in the hope we all have to see each other around the banquet table in heaven.
Until then,
We depart in peace serving our Lord.