



ENOUGH

DEVOTIONAL

July 29- August 4, 2018

Enough

In our daily lives, that word may occasionally come to mind as we question what we have, what we need, or our place in life:

*Has God given me **Enough** to survive on?*

*Do I have **Enough** to share with others?*

*Do I have **Enough** strength to make it through life's challenges?*

*Have I done **Enough** to please God?*

*Does God have **Enough** grace to cover even me?*

Each week of July and into the month of August we will look at the appointed New Testament Scripture readings to answer these and other questions. Join us as we learn, together, that by grace in Jesus Christ, God gives more than **Enough!**

We invite you to join us each week, too!

Daily devotional booklets like this one will be provided each week in an effort to connect the Sunday messages with your daily life.

The Sunday devotional offers a “review” of the morning’s Scripture readings and message, allowing opportunity to reflect on that day’s sermon. Throughout the rest of the week, each day offers a passage and a few thoughts to consider.

We pray these devotionals will be a blessing to you and your family, and in your Christian life!

When God Speaks Sermon Series Themes:

July 1: Enough to Share (2 Corinthians 8:1-15)

July 8: Enough Weakness (2 Corinthians 12:1-10)

July 15: Enough Riches (Ephesians 1:3-14)

July 22: Enough Barriers (Ephesians 2:11-22)

July 29: Enough to be Filled (Ephesians 3:14-21)

August 5: Enough to Go Around (Ephesians 4:1-16)

August 12: Enough is Enough! (Ephesians 4:17 – 5:2)

Enough to be Filled

Sunday Sermon Review

July 29, 2018

According to the World Health Organization, 300 million people around the world have depression. In the United States, 6.7 percent of adults have experienced a major depressive episode within the past year. Suicide rates are climbing higher and higher, with an average of 123 people killing themselves every day in our country. Many who have suffered depression or had thoughts of suicide have expressed the notion that “something’s missing” in life, or that there was an emptiness, a hole that could not be filled. In light of such dark thoughts and feelings, we are given a promising and hopeful message. We have a God who loves us so deeply; a God who struggles beside us and with us; a God who fills us and fulfills us in this life and into eternity. The same God who walked through turbulent waters to get to His disciples comes to you in your troubling life. The same God who placed His bow in the sky as a sign of His promise desires to be with us, to not let us destroy ourselves either. Where we find a hole, that emptiness where something’s missing, God seeks to fill it with His strength to overcome, with a peace that surpasses all understanding, and with a joy that has no end.

The Scripture Lesson Summaries for Today:

Genesis 9:8-17: After the flood, the Lord makes a promise with Noah and all creatures to never destroy the earth in such a way. He places His bow in the clouds as a reminder of His covenant.

Ephesians 3:14-21: Paul prays for the Ephesians, that they may have strength and the all-surpassing knowledge of Christ, being filled with the fullness of God.

Mark 6:45-56: After filling the crowd with food, Jesus dismisses them and sends the disciples away in a boat. He goes off to pray, before walking on the water toward the disciples. They are filled with fear, then awe. And then Jesus continued His mission of healing and teaching, as if nothing happened.

Reflecting on Today’s Sermon:

1. At what point was I confronted with the Law?
2. What comfort did the Gospel bring?
3. What story/phrase/teaching stuck out to me?
4. What did I learn about God from this sermon?
5. In response to the Word of God, I will...

Pray: *O Lord God Almighty, in this fallen world we see and experience many troubles and hurts which weigh heavy on our hearts and minds. We know that You have overcome all things through Jesus, and that His victory is our victory. So help us to be filled with Your strength and an unwavering faith to face each new day with joy and peace. Amen.*

I've Got Skills

Monday, July 30, 2018

Text: Read Exodus 31:1-11

Emphasis: Verse 3-4: “I have filled him with God’s Spirit, with wisdom, understanding, and ability in every craft to design artistic works in gold, silver and bronze.”

This passage introduces us to two of the more obscure characters in the epic story of Exodus. Bezalel and Oholiab are artisans of the highest order. The Bible tells us Bezalel was a first-rate metalsmith; Oholiab was a craftsman of textiles. It’s like if you had Donatello and Giorgio Armani tag teaming up to design your worship space. The two of them decked out the Lord’s tabernacle in the pinnacle of wilderness finery. Their handiwork was recognized for generations. Bezalel’s name was attached to the magnificent bronze altar he created until the reign of King Solomon more than 400 years later. (2 Chr 1:5)

For Bezalel and Oholiab, making beautiful things was their way to give glory to God. In creating the tabernacle’s luxurious furnishings, they were pouring out the gifts the Lord had filled them with. Not every Israelite was gifted in artistry to the degree that Oholiab and Bezalel were. They were uniquely positioned to reflect God’s glory through their craft.

If the God who spoke the universe into existence had simply wanted a beautiful tabernacle, He could’ve created it all by Himself. Rather, to fill His tabernacle with splendor, He first filled the lives of Bezalel and Oholiab with gifts that uniquely positioned them to serve. The same is true for each of us. As God’s unique creatures, each of us has been gifted in various ways and to different degrees.

While computers are part of my everyday life, I am a dunce when it comes to technology. Smartphones are a mystery to me. My little sister had to hook up my DVD player. God has not gifted me with an intuition for electronics. Thank the Lord that He didn’t create everyone like me! Some of you can use your expertise with technology to bring glory to God.

Maybe you have been filled with an analytical mind or a knack for numbers. Maybe you have been filled with organizational skills or diligent time management. Maybe God has filled you with imagination or creativity. Maybe you’ve been given a strong back and sturdy shoulders. Or maybe you have an artist’s eye and a craftsman’s touch, like Oholiab and Bezalel.

When we look at the variety of ways God fills His people, it should illustrate just how incomparable God is. No one else could adequately fill His job description. Scripture compares Him to a physician, an architect, a judge, a warrior, a shepherd, and a craftsman. Yet this great God humbles himself to let His work flow through our hands, hearts and lips.

Pray: Incomparable God, we are awed by all you are. Thank you for the skills you have filled me with. Help me to reflect you to the world by using my gifts to your glory. In Jesus, Amen.

Serving for a Season

Tuesday, July 31, 2018

Text: Read Deuteronomy 34:1-9

Emphasis: Verse 5: “So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the Lord’s word.”

The conclusion of the story of Israel’s rescue from slavery begins on this bittersweet note. The Lord’s chosen prophet, Moses, will not enter the Promised Land with the rest of God’s people. Just after our selected reading, Scripture tells us, “No prophet has arisen again in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.” (v. 10)

Despite his intimate relationship with God, Moses’ season of service came to an end. The mantle was passed to Joshua who was “filled with the spirit of wisdom” as Moses completed the ceremonial transfer of authority. Joshua would see God’s people home, while Moses would go home to be with the Lord.

Last Sunday, we said goodbye to Vicar Alex Lahue and his family. His friendly spirit, faithful heart and caring soul will leave an impact on our congregation even as his season of service here comes to an end. Saying goodbye is bittersweet.

Before he left, Vicar Lahue spent weeks training me for the task of serving as your vicar. Somewhat like Moses and Joshua, Vicar Lahue filled me with wisdom to prepare me for my season of service to the people of God in this place.

You, likewise, have been prepared for your own season of service. The same God who led Israel through the wilderness has orchestrated your life to be in this place at this moment. He has filled you with his gifts and surrounded you with people who need to feel the love and care of their Savior.

Often, we hold ourselves back when we know we are only serving for a season. We don’t want to get too close. We don’t want to become too invested. We don’t want to make ourselves too vulnerable. We don’t want to risk criticism.

But the same God who fills you by His grace calls you to share all that you are until your season of service has ended. Don’t worry about giving too much. He who fills you will fill you again. What new ways could you share the love with which Jesus has filled you with those whom God has placed you for this season?

Pray: God of overflowing love, help me to seek ways to grow in my season of service. Make me aware of chances to share. Make me eager to live a life of love to the glory of your name. Amen.

A Blessed, Happy Reunion

Wednesday, August 1, 2018

Text: Read Psalm 126

Emphasis: Verses 1-2: *When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Our mouths were filled with laughter then, and our tongues with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."*

I love watching videos with military members returning home unexpectedly. Don't you?! If you don't know what I'm referring to, go online to your search engine of choice and type, "military reunion videos." Then, proceed to watch a series of videos in which service members, men and women, surprise their spouse or children or siblings by walking in unexpectedly. Oh, and have a box of tissues handy, too!

The videos are all pretty much the same scenario played out each and every time: a family member is going about her/his day as usual; in walks their loved one who's in the armed services and has been away for months; a shriek or gasp occurs before a powerful hug and an ocean of tears ensue. It's pretty much that formula every time, but I never get tired of watching such reunions! Their joy and laughter becomes our joy and laughter!

To some degree, that's what we have going on in our Psalm passage for today. Psalm 126 is called "A Psalm of Ascents," of which there are several in the book of Psalms. These psalms were traditionally sung as one traveled to Jerusalem. And, as the words of this particular Psalm indicate, Psalm 126 was likely written in response to the return of the people from exile, on their way back to Jerusalem, ascending to a restored relationship with God.

The people of Israel, for generations, had turned away from the Lord. In response, God allowed other nations to conquer and pillage the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, enslaving many people and relocating them in foreign lands. They, of course, did not go willingly or out of a sense of duty. How they longed to return home! How they dreamed to be back in a right relationship with the Lord! Would this "deployment" ever end?

Finally, after 70 years—a lifetime—these prisoners of war were allowed to return. And what a joyful day that must have been! Families were reunited, some meeting face-to-face or learning of the other's existence for the first time! In spite of the long hardship they had faced, they and others could declare, "The Lord has done great things for them!"

The same is true for us. We were distant from God, far removed from Him—much of the world still is. But in Christ Jesus we are brought near to the Father once more. In Him we experience a happy reunion like no other. By faith in Jesus, we are filled with the same laughter and joy for eternity. What a blessed, happy reunion from Him who gave up so much for us!

Pray: *Lord God, our sin made us distant from You, but through Your Son Jesus, we are reunited with You! Let my days be filled with the joy of my salvation in Christ. Amen.*

Invaluable

Thursday, August 2, 2018

Text: Read Romans 15:1-13

Emphasis: Verse 13: *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

“I discovered I didn’t feel worthy of love unless I was accomplishing something. I suddenly realized I have never felt I could be loved for just being.” — Oprah Winfrey

“I had no idea who I was, or what I could be away from tennis...I was depressed and afraid because so much of my life had been defined by my being a tennis champion. I was completely lost. Winning made me feel like I was somebody. It made me feel pretty. It was like being hooked on a drug. I need the wins, the applause, in order to have an identity.”

— Chris Evert

“I had enormous self-image problems and very low self-esteem, which I hid behind obsessive writing and performing...I really felt so utterly inadequate. I thought the work was the only thing of value.”

— David Bowie

Whether one is a celebrity or your everyday “average Joe,” everyone wants to be accepted. Everyone wants that feeling of value and worth. We want approval from those around us.

The problem is we too often think that value, acceptance and worth are derived from our own actions and performance, how we look or who we’re related to. Even when we get that approval and acceptance, we may not be satisfied for long; there’s always a need for more. This is all symptomatic of sin, and with it, where we are putting our hope: in ourselves.

Our passage from Romans 15 points us to the value Christ has placed upon us. Paul writes of Jesus who came to serve the lowest of the low—those whom Jewish society had placed little, if any, value upon. Jesus accepts us, not for anything we’ve done, but in spite of our flawed selves. In Christ, whose precious blood was poured out for us, we are given great value. By our faith in Him, God looks on us approvingly.

So if the Lord sees me worth dying for, then there’s room for hope. Hope not in myself, but in something far greater and invaluable. Hope not in my performance or looks, but in Jesus’ promise and look of mercy upon me.

Filled with such hope we can be filled with peace in this life by the power of the Holy Spirit. We can be filled with joy because of that hope. And in that peace, joy, and hope we do as Paul says in verse 7: “*accept one another, just as Christ also accepted you, to the glory of God,*” that they, too may have hope in knowing the God who places such value on those who feel worthless.

Pray: *God of Hope, on my own I am worthless. So, I praise you for accepting me for Jesus’ sake, and making me invaluable by His death and by faith in Him. Let me live in the joy and peace that come only from You, glorifying You alone. Amen.*

Fruits of Righteousness for Spiritual Starvation

Friday, August 3, 2018

Text: Read Philippians 1:3-11

Emphasis: Verse 9-11: *And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.*

I was sitting across from Pastor Gary and Stephanie Schulte when they came to town a few weeks ago. Emma and I took them to lunch, treating our missionary guests and friends to a nice meal during their brief stay. Steph's eyes got real big when she saw the desert at another table full of chocolate, some chocolate covered fruit, and more layers of chocolate. It was so rich, and so massive—more than enough for just one person.

Not long after, we were discussing various needs in the mission field. They told us of another missionary they met recently who told the story of dirt pies—how the women would have nothing to make for food, so they'd mix dirt and anything they could find into a cake or cookie or pie so their children could have *something* to eat. But, as you can imagine, such a diet lacking all nutritional value only serves up more harm than good. Sure, the bellies may be full...but full of what? Quite a contrast of menu options, wouldn't you say?

Apart from the practical applications this contrast may stir in us (such as offering helpful and impactful assistance to those in need), I think we could also take this imagery and look at it through a "spiritual lens." In so doing, we see a similar contrast in the world.

All around us we see people starving—for attention, for praise, for glory. We see people hungering—for temporary things, for something greater than themselves. And occasionally these things of the world may fill their belly, but they are still spiritually famished.

In contrast, St. Paul writes to the Philippians, praying that they may be "filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ..." This fruit of righteousness is enough to fill you, and it is so spiritually nutritious! What a rich dessert in which to be filled! With layer upon layer of God's grace and love! It's more than enough for just one person. So this fruit of righteousness that fills us by faith is meant to be shared.

By faith, we offer it to those around us through selfless actions, with our kind words, and by telling them of our Savior. We live our faith in a way that others see it, desire it, and put down their "dirt pies" to be so satisfied with the fruits of Christ's righteousness to the glory and praise of God.

Pray: O Lord, we thank You for all that we have—especially the fruit of righteousness which fills us by faith. Let us live out that faith that others may believe. Amen.

Filled with Holiness

August 4, 2018

Text: Read Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13)

Emphasis: Verses 2-3: “*Seraphim were standing above Him; they each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Armies; His glory fills the whole earth.’*”

In the Old Testament we see this idea that if you touch things related to death, you become impure or unholy. When people would touch diseased animals or certain bodily fluids, the impurity of those things would “transfer” to the person. Thus, making them impure.

An impure person was unable to be in God’s presence because they were filled with unholiness and God is filled with holiness. So, God gave the Israelites various rituals that instructed them on how to become clean and holy again. The common practice was to become clean first, before going into God’s presence.

Isaiah was filled with sin. He even said, “I’m ruined because I’m a man of unclean lips.” He thought that God would destroy him because of his unholiness. However, God does something different than expected.

He fills Isaiah with holiness.

The hot coal with which the Seraphim touches Isaiah’s lips is a pure object that transfers God’s holiness and purity to him. It’s like in baptism and communion where the holiness of God is transferred over to us and He makes us pure and righteous in His sight.

When Jesus died on the cross, all the unholiness of our sins were transferred over to Jesus, and He died covered in our unholy, unclean impurity. Yet, through His resurrection we saw how God’s holiness overcomes sin and death and all things related.

Because of our faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit has filled us with the holiness of God. As a result, we display God’s glory to the earth.

God filled the world with His holiness and glory through His Son Jesus Christ. He also continues to fill the earth with His glory through us, the Church.

Whenever we share His message of salvation, demonstrate His love, and/or exhibit a life of joy despite tough circumstances, we show that God’s holiness overcomes sin and brokenness.

Pray: Father, thank you for filling us with your holiness through Jesus Christ. Strengthen us by your Holy Spirit to share your message with other people and demonstrate your love in various ways. Remind us that only you make us holy. Amen.

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