



ENOUGH

DEVOTIONAL

August 12- 18, 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?*

We pray you have been blessed by this series of sermons and devotionals throughout these past six weeks, as together we have sought answers to these and other questions. Ultimately, we know that by grace in Jesus Christ, God gives more than **Enough!**

If you happened to miss a week, or would like extra copies to share with others, please contact the Holy Trinity office or visit us online at holyltrinityedmond.org/devotions. You can also find our sermons from this series and more on our website and on RightNow Media.

We invite you to join us each week, too!

Daily devotional booklets like this one are 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!

Enough is ENOUGH!

Sunday Sermon Review

August 12, 2018

Repent! The word is sometimes defined as a feeling of regret or remorse about doing something bad. But that only gets you partway there. Repent—the word ultimately refers to a complete turning away from whatever gets in the way of our relationship to God. To repent means to stop walking in the way of sinners, and walk in the paths of righteousness. Our Christian life is a daily repentance. We're continually pulled toward the things of the world; continually tempted to live like the rest of society, with no consideration of God's will. Paul reminds us, though, we are no longer to live that way. We've been bought with the blood of Jesus. We put away our old way of life, according to our sinful nature. Enough is enough—repent, believe in the Gospel, and imitate Christ. Of course, we may take a turn for the worse now and then: Elijah did it, turning away from the victory God granted him, running in fear; the people Jesus spoke to would do it, turning away from the very Bread of Life. But God always offers us the opportunity, by faith and the Spirit's work through Word and Sacrament, to repent and return to Him.

The Scripture Lesson Summaries for Today:

1 Kings 19:1-8: After Elijah kills the prophets of Baal, he runs for his life until he's exhausted. God nourishes him and gives him strength and sustenance to endure.

Ephesians 4:17-5:2: Paul exhorts the Ephesians to put away their old way of living—no longer engaging in the sinful lifestyle of the pagan Gentiles, nor lying or stealing or stewing in anger. Rather, be finished with that kind of life; enough of that! Live as imitators of Christ.

John 6:35-51: Jesus continues the difficult teaching that He is the Bread of Life, offering His own flesh to eat for the life of the world. Whoever believes in Him has eternal life.

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, I give You thanks and praise for loving me. By my sinful nature I am in rebellion against Your will. Yet, in Your mercy, You offer forgiveness and a fresh start for all who repent and believe in Your only Son, Jesus. By faith, let me daily repent of my sins, turning away from my sinful self, and turn toward You, guided by Your Holy Spirit, to walk in the ways of Righteousness. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Do-Over

Monday, August 13, 2018

Text: Genesis 6

Emphasis: Verses 5-8: *When the Lord saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved. Then the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I created, off the face of the earth, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky—for I regret that I made them." Noah, however, found favor with the Lord.*

It all seems like such God has such a change of mind when reading from Genesis 1 to Genesis 6. What began as a "very good" creation suddenly becomes so corrupt, so wicked, so evil all the time that it grieved Him deeply. So, God decided to do something drastic.

In a sense, God said, "Enough is enough of all this sin and corruption." And soon, a plan was in place to just wipe it all out and start over, fresh and new. A "do-over."

Now, thankfully, God found favor with Noah, and would establish a covenant with him. The Lord, in chapter 9, sets His bow in the clouds so that He would remember His promise to not destroy the earth.

Whew!! I don't know what the world *really* was like before the flood, but I know what it looks like *today*. I can't imagine God would be too pleased, either. I imagine that, throughout history, had God not made His promise with Noah, He could have been more than justified in having multiple "do-overs" with His creation—ending it and starting again, and again, and again.

Actually, in a way, He does this already!

God accomplishes do-over after do-over through Baptism. The apostle Peter talks about this in his first letter. After briefly mentioning how God saved Noah and his family—eight souls in all—through the flood waters, Peter writes: "*Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...*" (1 Peter 3:21) Martin Luther, too, speaks of the Christian life as a "daily Baptism..."

God sees the corruption of our hearts. He sees the pervasive wickedness within us. He sees our natural inclination toward evil all the time. He sees it all, and it grieves Him. But He says, "Enough is enough!" And in the mighty flood waters of Baptism, God wipes it all away. By faith, with each new day, we remember our Baptism, and we claim its promise of forgiveness. By faith, the Lord finds favor with us, and for Jesus' sake gives us a daily do-over, fresh and new.

Pray: Lord, thank You for providing me a "do-over" with each new day. Let me live as Your redeemed child, as a new creation washed and renewed in my Baptism. Amen.

Remembering the Best Part

Tuesday, August 14, 2018

Text: Read Exodus 2:23-25

Emphasis: Verse 23: “After a long time, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned because of their difficult labor; and they cried out; and their cry for help because of the difficult labor ascended to God.”

It is not uncommon for my uncommonly thoughtful wife to ask, “what was the best part of your day?” Sometimes that question is easier to answer than others. Sometimes the day seems like a slog, moving from one challenge to another to another. Other times, it feels like one big pain in the neck seems to follow me all day long. My discomfort or disappointment can cloud my memory, making me wonder, “*was* there a ‘best part’ of this day?”

I’ve never said this to her, but on those days, I ought to turn to my wife and say: “*This* is the best part of my day. Today was a struggle. But you demonstrating your care and thoughtfulness, asking how I’m doing, *this* is the best part of my day. Thank you.” Just being known by someone puts challenges in perspective. Her love and care outlasts today’s headaches.

Our passage today comes at the end of a long, hard stretch for Israel. After 400 years of Egyptian slavery - 400 years of labor and tears – it might have been hard to pick out a “best part” of their day, year, or lifetime. But enough was enough. The best part was just ahead. Having heard their cries, God remembered. God remembered His promise. The rest of the book of Exodus tells the powerful story of what it looks like when God remembers you.

This passage starts with, “after a long time, the king of Egypt died.” What’s the king of Egypt’s name? Like all kings of Egypt from that era, he carries the title “Pharaoh”, but I’d challenge you read the entire book of Exodus and find the *name* of king of Egypt. It’s not there. The Bible doesn’t ‘remember’ the name of the most powerful human from one of the planet’s most powerful empires. But God remembers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob *by name*, and He makes good on the promise their descendants have been carrying with them for generations.

Some say the pain of childbirth is so intense, it clouds mothers’ memories; if they perfectly remembered the tears and pain of labor, they’d never have another baby. Yet for generations, memories of pain have given way to the excitement of new life. You are known to God. He perfectly remembers you and calls you His child. If you’re in a season of struggle, know your labor and tears are only temporary. Your cries of distress reach God’s listening ears. Your deliverer is coming and the best part of your story is still ahead as your Savior, Jesus, shows you what it looks like when God remembers you.

Pray: Remember me, O God, for the sake of my Savior, Jesus. Thank you for the new life I have in Him. Remind me that you have prepared the best part of my story. Amen.

The Lord Listens

Wednesday, August 15, 2018

Text: Read Luke 18:1-8

Emphasis: Verses 6-8: *Then the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. Will not God grant justice to his elect who cry out to him day and night? Will he delay helping them? I tell you that he will swiftly grant them justice. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”*

It happens a few times in the Gospels that Jesus tells a parable which uses a seemingly negative character to make his point about Himself. Today’s passage is one such occasion.

Jesus tells a parable of a woman who is so persistent in begging for justice from a judge. The two figures are on the two opposite ends of the ancient sociological spectrum.

The woman is a widow—one of the most powerless statuses of the day. She is absolutely helpless. In the Jewish culture, it was expected that widows would be taken care of to some degree. However, in this case, on the other end of the spectrum is the judge “who didn’t fear God or respect people.” This phrase implies he was not Jewish and he didn’t care about what his fellow gentiles thought of him—all that to say he has no care for widows, nor any concern for his reputation.

One scholar notes of New Testament era courts: “The courtroom was not a fine building but a tent that was moved from place to place as the judge covered his circuit. The judge, not the law, set the agenda; and he sat regally in the tent, surrounded by his assistants. Anybody could watch the proceeding from outside, but only those who were approved and accepted could have their cases tried. This usually meant bribing one of the assistants so that he could call the judges attention to the case....”

How could this poor woman possibly get justice?

As Jesus tells it, she’s persistent! She follows the judge from place to place in his circuit. She likely can’t afford a bribe, so she cries out over and over, day and night, “*Give me justice against my adversary.*” And, it works! Her persistence causes the shameless, godless judge to say, “Enough is enough!”

The point Jesus makes is that if unrighteous human judges with no regard for people behave this way, imagine how our righteous God will respond to our cries for help. He will bring justice! He promises to hear our prayers and to answer us.

Even after days, weeks, months, or years of praying to God without an answer—or, at least, not the answer we hoped for—be assured that He IS listening. The Lord is faithful. The Lord is just. The Lord listens!

Pray: *Lord God, I cry out to You, and I know that You hear me. Let me remain faithful, confident that You are listening. And let me rest in Your good timing. In Jesus, Amen.*

Why?

Thursday, August 16th, 2018

Text: John 19:28-30

Emphasis: Verse 28, 30: “After this, when Jesus knew that everything was now finished that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he said, ‘I’m thirsty.’ ... When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’ Then bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.”

If you hang out with a lot of toddlers, you will quickly find yourself trying to answer or ignore the infinite question of “why?”. Why? Because they are starting to learn and understand how things work and their mind is starting to become independent and curious.

Aren’t we all a little curious?

I’d like to think that a lot of the people present during Jesus’ crucifixion were asking the question, why? “Why is this man being crucified?” Perhaps, “why did we allow this to happen?”. And even people looking back on the event ask, “why would God allow this to happen?”. When Jesus said, “It is finished” and died, I bet Mary was asking questions too. “Why did I outlive my son?” “Why did he have to suffer and go through such a horrendous death?”

We ask questions too... and even of God.

“God, why does my aunt have cancer?” “God, why did I lose my mom at the age of 13? I needed her.” “God, why are so many people living in poverty?” “God, why did my parents get a divorce?” “God, why am I alive?”

The people at Jesus’ crucifixion didn’t fully understand the extent of what was happening. Their “why” questions were bound up with confusion, emotions, and limited knowledge. But three days later, and for years to come, it started to make sense. Jesus had to die in order to defeat sin, death, and the devil. God was fulfilling His plan through His Son on the cross. They didn’t understand the “why” until they understood the plan – the plan of salvation.

Just like a toddler doesn’t fully understand the world they live in and how it works, we don’t understand the spiritual realm. We ask “why” questions that are also bound in confusion, emotion, and limited knowledge. We don’t understand God’s big and perfect plan, but we can trust Him. We can rely on Him to do what is best for the kingdom, and He has continuously proven that He will.

Pray: Heavenly Father, you are God. You are the one who has given us life and purpose. While this world may not always seem fair or good, we know that you have a plan and that you are in control. Help us to do your will, and to rely on you in all situations. Amen.

Instrument of God

Friday, August 17th, 2018

Text: Acts 9:1-19 (20-22)

Emphasis: Verse 15: “*But the Lord said to him (Ananias), ‘Go, for this man is my chosen instrument to take my name to Gentiles, kings, and Israelites.’”*

I never dreamed of having a profession in church work. It was never even on my radar. I didn’t start going to church until 4th grade, and by then I already had a list of things I wanted to be – why would that change?

But my freshman year of college I was supposed to go on this Fall Retreat with a church club at school. I didn’t want to go, I had other things to do – namely work which was directly impacting my future job outlook at the local hospital. Regardless, I was supposed to go, so I got someone to fill my spot and went.

This retreat... changed my life.

Afterwards I felt like a new person with new eyes. I was seeing the world for the first time and was finally free from all the pressure I didn’t even know I was experiencing. Within a few months I was challenged to enter church work, and after initial reluctance, truly felt God pulling me in that direction, so I pursued.

In our reading, God is done with Saul’s persecution towards His Church. God revealed himself in Saul’s weak moment (having been blinded and helpless) allowing Saul to see God in a new way. No longer was this God an enemy and foe causing injustices, up rivals, and chaos, but He was a God who was omnipotent yet merciful and caring. A God to be served.

God directly called Saul to be His instrument – and an instrument he was! Saul started churches, mentored disciples, encouraged churches and became a role model for Christianity. God works through His instruments.

But, the truth is, God is calling ALL of us to be His instruments. God wants to use us for His Kingdom work. Sure, that might be in full time ministry, but that also might be as an engineer, a doctor, a firefighter, a janitor, a lawyer, a teacher. God uses us where we are and guides us to the places He has prepared for us. That means we also need to remember that sometimes God calls us to something else. Just like God called Ananias to a new ministry opportunity, God can ask us to pursue other vocations, or consider other ministry opportunities.

In what ways is God calling you?

Pray: Lord of Mercy, you reveal yourself to us each and every day. You call each and every one of us, and desire to use us as your instruments. Open our eyes to how you want to use us. Amen.

Until Then

Saturday, August 18, 2018

Text: Read Revelation 22

Emphasis: Verses 2-4a: “The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations, and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face.”

Revelation is chock full of extravagant imagery and the final chapter doesn't disappoint. A flowing river. A golden boulevard. A perpetually blossoming tree. The overload of images in Revelation can sometimes be hard to interpret, but the tree of life in the Bible's final chapter should point us all the way back to the beginning.

In the beginning, God's perfect people were gathered in their own holy city around the tree of life. There, they enjoyed the presence of the Lord and the abundance of His perfect creation. But God's people rejected their perfect paradise, choosing their own glory over God's. Sin and its corruption introduced the curse of death, and the tree of life was made off-limits.

But the curse will not go on forever. Revelation concludes with a clear, decisive undoing of all that sin has poisoned. God's people will once again gather in His presence and enjoy the abundant fruit of the tree of life.

But what do we do until then? What can we do when we feel we've had enough of this world's pain and brokenness, when our hearts ache for heaven's perfection? Where can we go to experience God's real presence? Where can we go to gather as God's people around His tree of life? Where can we join our hearts in worshiping at the throne of God with the music of heaven like, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain...blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God”? (Rev. 5:12, 7:12)

One pastor I know likes to call our Divine Service “a taste of heaven on earth.” It's where we gather as God's people, experiencing the real presence of our Savior in word and sacrament, joining our hearts in singing the songs He's given us, surrounding the tree of life: the cross of Jesus Christ.

Billy Graham used to say, “I've read the last page of the Bible. It's all going to turn out alright.” Now you've read it, too. And He who testifies about these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon. I'll see you tomorrow.”

Pray: Eternal, everlasting and ever-living God, prepare me to meet you in worship tomorrow. Allow me to experience worship as a taste of heaven. Humble me in your presence and lift me up in joy at receiving your gifts. Use the worship of God's people to strengthen my faith as I look forward to heaven's perfection. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

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