

6/21/2010

Colossians 3:12-24

12 Therefore, as God's **chosen** people, **holy and dearly loved**, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive **as the Lord forgave you**. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the **word of Christ** dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. 20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. 22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Hebrews 13:17-18

17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. 18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.

Matthew 16:16-18

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" 14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

INTRO - On this day of celebration here at Zion, it is also Fathers' Day 2010. I remember Father's Day weekend 1996. A group of St. John worship board members were in Chicago attending a Dave and Barb Anderson worship conference. When the conference was over we went to worship at a well known mega-Church, Willow Creek Church. I still remember the service and the sermon, First, there were no crosses anywhere. There were only one or two references to Jesus in the whole service. And, the sermon for Father's Day was about how bad a father King David was and how fortunate we are today to have the help of counselors. I left wondering, "Where was the mention of God, especially the mention of God as Father on Fathers' Day." God seemed missing.

You may be wondering at our text for tonight, On this occasion of celebrating the ministry of one retiring pastor, and on the occasion of installing another pastor to a new position, there seems to be no mention of a pastor.

I. However, in a way our reading may be like a "Where's Waldo" book. He's there if you look.

A. Do you see this Scripture section which talks about the Christian life. The section is summed up by verses 23 and 24.

1. **23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.**

2. You see, these verses talk about the ultimate job of the pastor. Pastor Kuehnert, and Baumgarten, and Tia were at our workers' conference last month in Soldotna. We were told the job of a church worker, the job of a pastor is to do this (Point) We point to Jesus.

a. Jesus is the Lord, the creator and ruler, the almighty God of the universe.

b. Jesus is the Christ, the promised fulfillment of all the needs and hopes of God's creation. Only Jesus died for the sins of the world, and rose again.

3. You see, by pointing to the Lord Christ, we are describing the job of pastors. They may be hidden in this verse, but they are there.

B. Unfortunately, pointing to Jesus doesn't always happen, even for pastors. Other worthwhile things can distract our pointing.

1. We might be tempted to point, as Lutherans, to Martin Luther. But, he is not the Lord Christ, and Luther himself pointed to grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone, ultimately to CHRIST ALONE. If we point first to another person we distract from Jesus.

2. We might be tempted to point to the character of our denomination, to

Biblical conservatism, or to the mood of the day, compassionate humanism. But again, neither is the Lord Christ.

3. Sometimes pastors are tempted to point to themselves, and their effort, and their wisdom and righteousness. But, that is not the Lord Christ.

C. I will ask you to do something with me in a second.

1. I have known Pastor Kuehnert since he came to Alaska, actually, I believe I remember meeting him in Ft. Lauderdale in the 80's. He is a man of great gifts, but a human, who is not perfect as no one is. That is why we need a Savior.

2. As long as I have known him the goal of Philip, or Pastor Kuehnert, has been to point to Jesus.

3. You don't know the effort, the prayers, the tears a pastor exerts on behalf of Jesus Church and his people.

4. But, it is not his effort I wish to honor today, it is his faithful goal to continue pointing to Jesus.

5. Would you join me in thanking our Lord for this faithful pointing to Jesus. Please rise with me and sing, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow."

II. People in Palmer figure it hasn't been a sermon if they haven't heard a fishing story, or a baseball story, though they don't always happen. Anyway, here's a baseball story.

Have you noticed the drama happening in Boston this weekend. Manny Ramirez who helped to lead the Red Sox to two World Series victories, is back in Boston for the first time since he was traded. The man who was supposed to replace him is David Ortiz. Ortiz just hasn't done as well since Ramirez left, until recently. It's hard to follow a legend. But, on Friday night Ortiz' home run not only won the game, he also tied Ramirez' total of home runs with the team.

A. Pastor Baumgarten, Joe, you are a pastor with many gifts and abilities. You have a wonderful task in front of you to lead this faithful and effective church in serving the Lord Christ. To be honest it is difficult following someone who has been so effective. But, that is not your job, your job is pointing to Jesus. He is Lord and Christ, our God and all we need.

B. Perhaps a bigger difficulty is that pastoring a church today is an ever more difficult job.

1. When Pastor Kuehnert started serving, the church was an accepted and important part of our culture.

2. Today, the church is looked down on as out dated with a message people don't always want to hear, even though they need it.

3. Please turn with me to Matthew 16. Here Peter points to Jesus as Lord and Christ. **13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" 14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"** 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Do you see Jesus' response. **17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.**

4. Pastor Joe, no matter how difficult the job of Zion in pointing to Jesus, even the Gates of Hell cannot prevail against it.

C. People of Zion, you need to hear something too from our text for tonight. First, please look at Hebrews 13. **17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. 18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.**

1. First of all, the job of pastor is not like the old joke, which says, "Pastors are paid to be good, the rest of us are good for nothing." Actually, the pastor is not to do all the work, he is to point to Jesus as the whole church serves Him, and points others to Him. Sometimes the people can get in the way of this job and make the job a burden when they forget the job of the church is pointing to Jesus.

2. Actually, that is what makes tonight's Colossians text perfect for this occasion. The job of the church is not just about the pastor, but about people working together to serve the Lord.

3. Tonight's Bible reading tells you how to work together with your pastoral leader in doing this work.

A. It happens when you **forgive each other**, as it says in verse 13, and **"put on love"** as we are told in verse 14. It happens when you are **"thankful and worship God"** as we are called to do in verses 15-17. It happens when **families live in Christ's forgiveness and love** as we are told in verse 18-22.

B. When we are all serving the Lord Christ, then the job of a pastor is easier, because together we point to the Lord and Savior.

4. Tonight's Bible verse tells us where we get the strength to work together in this antagonistic world to point to Jesus. That strength is not found in ourselves but in our Lord, who has **chosen us and loved us**, according to verse 13, who **forgives us**, so we can forgive each other. It

happens when **God's Word dwells in us**, so that we know Jesus is the Lord Christ, and we trust in Him, so we point to Him.

CONCLUSION - Today is not only Father's Day, it is summer solstice, the time, especially here in Fairbanks, of Great light. A great time for the celebration of ministry, and ministers. It is all about the light of the world, Jesus Christ.