

Getting Your Toes Wet

Jeremiah 29:11: “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

On a recent trip to San Jose del Cabo, I learned the Pacific Ocean isn't always welcoming to visitors. On a hot sunny day I walked to the beach only to be met by a beach patrol officer telling me in broken English, “No get in the water, Senora, too rough.” I replied, “Okay only my toes, it's hot, I'll just get my feet wet!” He said, “No Senora too rough, you'll lose track stepping in the water, a wave will come and you'll be gone.” So I agreed to walk on the hot sand, avoiding the water—but the water looked so good, perfectly clear and blue and I could tell it had to be so refreshing. Like a little child disobeying her parent, once I had walked a long way, I stopped and turned to see if the kind beach patrol man could see me. When I determined he couldn't AND I spotted another woman coming toward me IN THE WATER, I began my descent down a steep incline toward the water. I stopped at a spot where the next wave allowed the water to flow over my feet—ahhh, it was better than I had imagined. To experience this feeling again I would need to take another step or two into the water, the dangerous area I've been warned about. Does any of this sound familiar? Sin, temptation has a way of luring us in, one good feeling at a time. Even when we've been warned, our sin nature says, “Just this once”. Thankfully a stronger wave headed toward me and I quickly retreated. Stay close to God, follow His path, and avoid the consequences of getting your toes wet.

-Kim Hendrix, Media Ministries Director

Jeremiah 17:7-8 “But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

While Joel and I were in Nevada skiing, we stayed with some friends who lived near Fallon. It was amazing to me how we could be in the mountains skiing in the snow and then drive down into the desert where they lived. There were plenty of trees in the mountains surrounding Lake Tahoe, but the desert was mostly barren. There was sage brush and some desert grass but no trees except for Joshua trees. When I first saw one, I asked our friends what it was and after they told me I did a little research. The tree was named by Mormon settlers as they crossed the desert in the mid-19th century. The tree's shape reminded them of the Biblical story of Joshua lifting up his hands in prayer. Joshua trees grow quickly during their first several years and they send down roots deep, some as deep as 36 feet. They can grow to be 49 feet and can live hundreds of years, some even a thousand. Wow! What lessons we can find in the Joshua tree! Remember to pray and lift our hands to the sky in prayer and praise. Put down deep roots and drink deeply from the Lord's reservoir, even in our driest desert times. God will sustain us with long and even eternal lives when we trust and rely upon Him. Thanks to whoever named these plants Joshua trees and to Our God who created them.

Neil Epler, Congregational Care Pastor

Human Think, Human Do

Proverbs 23:7 “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”

What you put into your mind sooner or later is going to show up in the way you act and live and respond to life. The human mind is an amazing instrument. It is a thought-producing factory. It produces thousands of thoughts every day, and what you put into your brain will determine your thoughts. Someone said, “A man is known by the company his mind keeps.” We can think ourselves into a state of misery and unhappiness. We can also think our way into a state of joy and happiness. If you think about yourself all the time, you get self-absorbed and selfish and depressed. If you think about others, you become a giving person. If you think about sin for long enough, you will think yourself into action. If you think about your problems all day long, you become miserable. If you think about possibilities, then you live with hope. Long before people were preaching and teaching about the power of positive thinking, there was God reminding us of the power of our thoughts. In Philippians 4:8 we are reminded that “Whatever is excellent, whatever is pure, whatever is good, whatever is beautiful, think on these things.” In other words, fill your mind with good stuff, Godly stuff. If you change your thoughts, you can change your life. Read, watch, and listen to positive, uplifting words. Avoid negative, trashy world talk, and fill your mind with God thoughts, with God's word. Let the mind of the Master be the master of your mind. Today change your thoughts to God thoughts, and you may discover that it will change your entire life.

- Tim Thompson, Senior Pastor

A LIFE OF MADNESS

Genesis 50:19-20, “But Joseph said to them, “Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

One of my favorite times of the year is March and the beginning of April. That time of year is known as March Madness because of the NCAA Basketball Tournament. Famous sports commentator, Brent Musburger, made the phrase “March Madness” what it is today. The games of this tournament always amaze me. Most of the time the games go down to the last second and even possibly overtime. The madness of this tournament is fun to watch from the outside, but I can't even imagine what it feels like to be right there in the game and experience it. The madness of this tournament makes me think about my life. There are certain times of my life where I feel like it is complete madness. Things are not going the way I feel like they should. I feel like the walls around me are falling down. This brings me to the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50. If anyone's life was filled with “March Madness,” Joseph fit the category. Joseph goes through slavery and prison, but God works through his madness for good. The verse above Joseph explains that God intended his madness for good to accomplish what is being done, the saving of many lives. The madness of Joseph's life is great encouragement for us today to trust God in our madness and believe that He is working it all together for His good. May you and I today rely on God's strength to trust Him as we walk through this life!

Chase Faulk, Student Minister

CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

WESLEY HALL - March 13, 2016

WORSHIP GUIDE & DAILY DEVOTIONS

SERMON SERIES: CRUX

Week 1– Choose Grace

Week 2 – Choose Humility

Week 3 – Choose Truth

Week 4 – Choose Trust

Week 5 – Choose Sacrifice

Week 6 – Choose Forgiveness



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Choose Sacrifice

Following Jesus requires surrender

Jesus told him, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Matthew 19:21-22

One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” And they left their nets at once and followed him. A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind. Matthew 4:18-22

“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross, and follow me. If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life. And how do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul in the process? Is anything worth more than your soul?” Matthew 16:24-25

Following Jesus requires courage

“At that point, all the disciples deserted him and fled.” Matthew 26:56b

“The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13

Following Jesus requires perseverance

At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, “Are you also going to leave?” Simon Peter replied, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life.” John 6:66-68

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish.” Hebrews 12:1-2a

Following Jesus is the greatest privilege

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field. Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!” Matthew 13:44-46

“I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ.” Philippians 3:7-8

— Rev. Brandon Dasinger
Teaching Pastor and Director of Missions
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Go Deeper:

1. Read Matthew 4:12–16 and Isaiah 9:1–2. How has Jesus brought light to your darkness? How can you join Jesus in bringing that light to others?
2. Read Matthew 4:18–22 and Luke 5:1–11. How did the disciples react to Jesus’ call? What did they leave behind? How long did their response take? What was Peter’s reaction when he realized Jesus’ identity? Why do you think these four men reacted the way they did?
3. Read Matthew 4:17 and 19. What does it mean to follow Jesus? How are abandonment and repentance related? What do followers of Jesus turn from? And where do they turn to?
4. What are the costs of discipleship? What are the benefits? What are the costs of non-discipleship?

Watch today’s sermon on WFRZ-TV or online at frazer.church/.
You may also order a CD of today’s service at the Connection Point desk.

Losing a Generation

Matthew 5:14. “You are here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.” (The Message)

Numerous studies reveal that the church is struggling in its attempts to reach young people. In addition, many of our teenagers who do attend church will drop out when they hit college. Research also shows that the church is perceived by many as boring, hypocritical, judgmental, exclusive, and too political. So . . . what can we do? Is there any good news in these bleak numbers? Well, many books and churches are showing a way forward. Here are just a few ideas:

1. Be honest and confess—Young people are looking for a church and for leaders who are real, honest, and vulnerable. Christians need to model forgiveness. . . asking for it and giving it.
2. Fruitful Dialogue—We can have open and honest discussions without being mean. We do not need to be apolitical. However, we need to be aware of whether or not our language comes off as demeaning or patronizing. We can have convictions and opinions. . . but we also need a sense of humility and grace.
3. Love Jesus and Serve People—Currently Christians are known for being unlike Jesus; one of the best ways to shift that perception would be to love and serve those outside our church walls. This requires compassion, kindness, and strength. No amount of cool worship services or amazing programs will suffice. It comes down to this: we must become Christ-like again. We must commit to doing the hard work of recapturing Christianity’s essence in our own lives: putting the needs of others above our own, loving our neighbor, exercising humility, suffering with those less fortunate, and doing it all with a pure heart.

- Rev. Brandon Dasinger, Teaching Pastor and Director of Missions

Library Fines

Ephesians 1:6-7 “So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.”

I’m a big fan of public libraries. Over the years I’ve checked out hundreds of books, especially for reading to my children. I’ll admit that sometimes I’m late returning my books, and the fines add up, but ultimately I’m glad to pay because the privilege of checking out books is worth much more to me. The city of San Jose is reporting that their library is owed \$6.8 million in overdue fines. The problem is they can’t collect it, because people who know they owe a lot just stop using the library. 40% of the library cards they have issued are now inactive. It defeats the whole purpose of having a library if people don’t use it. Some people treat church that way. At one time they worshiped God, but they have done things they are not proud of, and now they feel too guilty or ashamed to come back to worship. But that’s a huge misunderstanding. The whole point of church is that God wants to be in relationship with us. Jesus has already paid our “fines” through his death on the cross. His blood paid for what we could never pay for ourselves. Don’t let your overdue guilt keep you from accepting the grace that God offers.

- Ken Roach, Content Development