

Three Simple Services

Wednesday, August 12

Do Good

7 PM

Church of Good Shepherd United Methodist



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Do Good

Welcome

Scripture

Philippians 2: 3-4

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

How many times have I been told,
O Christ, by well-meaning people,
that is my destiny and my charge
to go out into the world
and do great things for you?

How many times in response
have I prayed earnestly,
asking that you would bring
such things to pass –
that you might use me mightily
for the work of your kingdom?
How many times have I then
waited expectantly.

And waited.

And waited

for that great thing, whatever it might be,
to be made obvious?

How many times have I felt then
the gradually settling weight of disillusionment,
of disappointment and confusion,
when no *great thing* materialized, when no
life-changing opportunity suddenly
arrived at my doorstep, when no such moment
of call or clarity was ever manifest at all?

In the confused afterglow
of those receding anticipations,
I am always faced again with
the unglamorous reality of my own life:
of my ongoing failures simply to love well
the people around me,
and of my own everpresent struggle
even to desire and to pursue

a path of righteousness
and obedience in my own
small daily choices and habits.
I am faced again
with the same litany of tired,
old temptations
towing their attendant shames,
and in such times I am left, O Lord,
wondering if I have somehow
missed your call completely,
and whether I might just as well abandon
the pilgrim path entirely, for I fear that you
must see me as I see myself:
 unfit
for any service to you,
or to your people,
or to the world.

So tell me, my God, where is the disconnect
between that life rife with breathtaking
demonstrations of your power
that I am told should be the hallmark
of my walk with you –
where is the disconnect between
those fantastic notions and reality
of my actual life, which is filled with petty
frustrations, mundane responsibilities,
and constant reminders of my own failure
to wear well the name of Christ?

Was it wrong that I should even desire
to do great things for you, Jesus?
Am I amiss to plead that I might be mightily
used in your works?

 Do I need more faith?

 More righteousness?

 More of your Spirit?

Or have you simply judged me
unworthy of your service?

Where, O Lord, do I go from here?

A Moment of Silence

O Child of God, listen well, and be comforted.
God has never judged you unfit for any service

God has called you to,
for it is in Christ's righteousness
God has clothed you. And God's measure of
greatness has never been your own.
If you would pray to do great things for your
God, then you must pray such prayers without
regard for how they should be answered.

Pray them knowing that in God's true and holy
reckoning such greatness will most often be
expressed in a long practice
of humble and sacrificial servanthood,
and not in any pursuit promising a rise
to power, position, or prestige.
God's might is most often displayed
as the grace that cradles and transcends our
brokenness and poverty of spirit. If you would
be so broken, that the light of God's grace might
be more visible within you, shining from your
chipped seams and shattered fragments,
then by all means make such earnest requests
of him; make them with sincerity and
without reservation!

But if the root of your prayer is rather some
desire for a heightened prominence or sense of
accomplishment and worth – either in
your own eyes or in the eyes of others –
then it would be better not to pray such
prayers at all. Examine well your heart
and motives, before asking that
God's greatness be displayed in your life.

When God answers,
it will not be on your terms.

For it is not you that will do any great thing
for God, but God laboring in you and through
you who will greatly accomplish God's own good
purposes according to the workings of
God's sovereignty and love.

Be liberated now from this burden of believing
that anything depends upon you –
and so be liberated at least to give yourself to God's

joyful service in grateful response for the grace
God has lavished upon you!

You have till now been too invested
in the results of your own efforts,
as if those outcomes were a thing you could ever
know or measure in this life!

Be invested instead, child,
in simple obedience to your king,
and in long faithfulness to God's call,
shepherding daily those gifts and tasks
and relationships God has entrusted to you,
regardless of outcomes and appearances.

God will bring all things right in God's way
and in God's time. All God asks is your willingness.

Your heart is in God's hands.
Your ways are in God's hands.
Your days are in God's hands.

Be content in the station God has appointed
you to in the season, and yet be ever ready
to move at the impulse of God's love.
Tend well those things
that are before you, however humble they be,
and God will lead you in time
to other good works God has appointed for you.
Whether big or small is of no matter.
God attaches no numbers
to your service. It is your heart
and faithfulness God appraises.

Seek not your own glory.
Seek God, and God's glory
will be seen in you, radiant in humility
and in the strength of God's might made
manifest even in your brokenness, evident
even in the smallest of services rendered unto
God or offered in God's name,
even though they be seen
by none but you and God;
your reward is secure.

Pray silently

Is this still your heart's desire then, to do great works for the kingdom of heaven?

**It is, though I had not known
before even what it meant. I ask now for
grace that I might truly and humbly repent
of any root of vainglory buried in my former
prayers, and I pray also for grace that I might
now ask aright, in purity of heart, that the
good works of God would be manifest in
their many outworkings in my heart and life,
at all times and in all endeavors, howsoever it
pleases God.**

Amen. Now, child of God, avail yourself of God's
Spirit, that you might go and learn to love God
and love others, practicing
God's mercies daily. There is no greater work
appointed to you!

**Alleluia! Then to this great work
of learning to bear God's likeness and Go's light,
I commit my life.**

"They'll Know We are Christians by Our Love"

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
we are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
and we pray that all unity may one day be restored:

And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our
love; yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
we will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
and together we'll spread the news that God is in our land:

And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our
love; yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

May God strength and encourage you, and lead
you gently in that good way.
Go in peace now to do God's will.

Amen. To Christ be the glory. Amen

Excerpt from "Every Holy Moment," Volume 1 by Douglas Kaine McKelvey