

Remember Who You Are
November 1, 2009
All Saints Sunday
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2 Corinthians 4:7- 10

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.

Friday I had the privilege of being part of a panel discussion at Calumet College on the subject of Reconciliation. The forum was titled: BROKEN REGION: The Need for Reconciliation in Northwest Indiana.

One of the issues that were discussed was the need for persons to know who they are, so that they can achieve reconciliation. Without that self-awareness, reconciliation is virtually impossible.

Knowing who you are, is also critical as we move forward on our life journey.

But one of the problems is, we are given all kinds of different messages from our culture as to what the world thinks we should be.

Dove soap has had a campaign about real beauty.

It is a great campaign and reminds us that who we are isn't always what we see in the TV and magazine ads

<< VIDEO >>

I want to take a moment and talk about the goal of our life long journey.

As I have told you before, the goal of the journey of life, is not about some kind of destination - whether we call that heaven or something else.

The goal of the journey is the journey → but the question is How do we travel?

And as Christians → what makes us Christians is that we journey IN Christ.

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So, if living In Christ is the road that we want to travel on

- How do we understand ourselves so we know that we are traveling the right way

Who are you?

And what informs your values?

1. You are a child of God

(Genesis 1:26–27 NRSV) Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; . . . So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

All people are children of God – regardless of what we profess to believe or how we live.

2. As Christians we have CHOSEN to live IN CHRIST

The word "disciple" literally means A LEARNER

According to Vine's Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words, it denotes "one who follows another's teaching"

But a disciple was not only a learner, he was also AN ADHERENT

For this reason disciples were spoken of as IMITATORS of their teacher. For us as Christians that means we try to imitate our teacher Jesus and have him live in us!

How do we understand that?

In the United Methodist Tradition we talk about four ways of understanding our Journey of living In Christ.

Through → Reason
Experience
Tradition
Scripture

Reason being our intellect

Experience being real life experience --- does it work

Tradition is what has been passed on to us from those who have been on this journey before

Scripture - what is found in the biblical understanding

Maybe a better way to say this is:

Our journey must be one of:

The Head
The Heart and
The Hands

And when we are engaged in those ways - then the journey is about service and social justice

Taking care of what is called in Luke's Gospel
The Least, the lost and the last

In other words → it is not about you

But about those that you come into contact with along the journey

There are a number of sign posts along the way of our journey as Christians

- Baptism
- Confirmation
- Marriage
- Communion
- Membership

But maybe the biggest marker is:

- How we live

What are our values?

Do we struggle with injustice that exists around us?

Do we care about the disenfranchised?

Or are we more concerned about preserving what we have?

I thought that we recently saw a great example of what it is to live in Christ and to know who you really are.

We all have witnessed the tragedy that happened a week ago in Hammond with the murder of Milton and Ruby McClendon. Even before anybody was arrested Garrard McClendon said that he forgave those who did the crime because it was

the only way to move forward. To hold on to the anger would keep him prisoner to it.

That is living IN Christ

T.S. Eliot

We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.