

Sermon - June 15, 2008 Psalm 100, Colossians 3:12-17

Opening -

Since last Sunday – and if you were here you may remember the sermon Title then was Holy Interruptions - God's Teaching Moments - Since last Sunday there have been some interruptions in all of our lives In many of your lives, as the storms and the power outages interrupted the normal pace and flow of your lives And in the life of your church –

Where we have been hosting the South Oakland Shelter – providing a temporary home for nearly 30 people all without power until last night.

More than a few members thanked me last Sunday for trying to tell it like it is.... Like it was – remember – for Jesus, and is for us. That our lives do get Interrupted – and those interruptions can be very godly teaching moments.

It is sometimes at the times when our normal lives are interrupted that we, in fact, learn more about life and about ourselves, and about God's presence at work in our lives, than when things are just humming along.

I know that I know more about the deep faith commitment, and the incredible generosity and faithfulness of this Church, of many of you, from what I saw happen this week...

Many of you coming from homes without power, in some cases, homes damaged by the storms, and, never the less, offering your help to help others, to help us host in the best way possible our guests. You helped fill this week of major interruptions in your lives with some very holy moments of learning for me, and of compassionate sharing that touched others deeply.

You made it a very good week - but - it is only fair to say that a number of you have commented to me during this long week that if I know something in advance like there was going to be this major interruption in our lives – they would appreciate my giving them at least a little advance notice....

Someone said – last week – that they felt some real truth in the preaching. But that the sermon didn't have quite enough power to get him through this week....

But we have power now - here today, and having seen your response to SOS, as well as the work of those working on our Habitat for Humanity home, and those off to Washington in mission - I have seen some real power ... the power of the Holy Spirit, and the power of your Faithfulness.... All week long.

I thank so many of you who again have made our mission statement true - Caring for Christ, and the Church and the Community.

There are no announcements for you to read this morning.... But let me touch briefly on some important notes about coming events...

Teachers - Flowers in Heritage Hall – for you!

SOS - for those of you who brought dishes, or containers, or loaned us items to use this week – please pick up your things this morning.... And thank you again.

Please think about how you might help us complete our Habitat for Humanity Blitz Build project - the web site – emailed to you a listed in the bulletin will show you where help is needed - and – yes – any financial contribution will be appreciated.

Next Sunday our Summer Schedule begins - with early worship at 9 - either outside on the lakeshore – weather permitting, or in the gathering space. Children will be in worship at the 10:30 service until after the children's moment.

Socks are still being collected for the New Wilmington Missionary Conference to be distributed in places of great need - bare foot children contract worms - a major health concern I saw in Africa.

Next Sunday we will print the names of those who have served in music ministry. The Academy of adult learning continues this summer with Theology 101 – on the basics of our beliefs - Wednesday mornings with Pastor Wilhelmi, And the Sunday Class on other faiths – continues at 9:00 – with Ron Verduin.

As you can see – things are beginning to look a bit more orderly and lovely – around our property – and in our new facility –

And on Sunday June 29 we will be offering a Grand Open House to the public to – of course worship with us – but to come see what we have done, building to share, in new construction,

And will do for our Youth Ministry and Adult Faith Learning with some remodeling this summer. Already space is cleared for re-storing the old Chapel space for meditation, worship, and for small weddings and services of witness to the Resurrection.

Invite your friends to see your Church – have them come early for the fire works – We will even have food available...

We are an active community of faith – but all our activity only truly counts when it is a faithful response to God's great gifts to us.... That we might live more closely to God's will for us – let us join in a time of prayer...

Let us listen join in the call to prayer - listen to the children's call

Message -

Bruce has given us some very good words and thoughts on the place and the meaning of music in the life and ministry of the Christian Church, and of our Church. And Bruce lives it out in his own life - how blessed for him this Father's day to have his wife Jane ringing bells, and singing, and, yes, getting Bruce here on time. And to have his daughter Kirsten leading the Cherub Choir and ringing bells and his daughter Caitlyn singing the solo piece in the anthem.

I cannot do better in sharing the message about the place of music in the life of the Church and our lives.

But, what I want to do in these brief moments is to express both appreciation and admiration for the way so many of you have helped to make holy music through your Christ-like ministries. As the Hymn sings... There is a sweet sweet spirit in this place - because of the faithfulness in your lives, and it was especially and noticeably present this past week,

In Paul's words that we read this morning, from Colossians, Paul ends with words about our worship, but talks throughout about ministry and mission. About a Christ like life style. Remember his words...

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility... above all clothe yourselves with love.

Paul echoes the message from last week – when we honored all those involved in Christian Education – he wrote - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all Wisdom - you and I really do need to know the truth before we can fully and faithfully live the truth.... And Paul knew it....

And then Paul talks about worship - with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God... And he ends his passage with those strong words about our living worshipful and faithful lives.

What ever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, Giving thanks to God the father through him.

I have many images from this past week that reinforce Paul's vision of the Christian life... You, some of you, coming to Church bringing food cooked at home because we couldn't cook it here – or trading with someone else to bring something cold because you had no power yourselves.

Flash lights and ice appearing mysteriously and miraculously just when needed. And patience with the Pastoral staff as we tended more this past week to our guests than to some of you who were undergoing – yes – interruptions of a major sort in your own lives.

And I have been encouraged by the comments I have heard putting our own inconvenience in proper perspective - this has been an inconvenient and not cheap experience for us – with some lingering effects. But we are not living in Cedar Falls, or DesMoines, Iowa. We are not down river on the Mississippi; we are not in the Middle East, or China, or in earth quake shaken Japan.

And many of you have mentioned this truth this week.... And reminded me of the truth that Paul nailed down - that we are blessed and have so much to be thankful for that we can truly sing God's praises. We can – as we will - Sing with Joy

I have two new – maybe not new – maybe just renewed images of this Church that will not fade - two images of two members. And – I know it is unfair to pick out anybody - because every body who is part of this part of the Body of Christ is part of making the music of faith that we make with our life as a Church.

But last night about 10 p.m. I saw Dodie Berry getting things set for our guests for the night – after being here at 7 a.m. to help get every body up and off.... And that was Dodie's schedule every day this week

And Dodie directs the Bell Cantos.... And fills in for Bruce.... And it all began when Dodie was in the children's choir back in 1871 – I even have a picture of her getting out of a row boat to worship here.

And another late nighter last night was Joe Halfmann - finishing a week of long long days landscaping our property, a job he has been a part of for many years....

Just two of so many - the Rodgers, and Dily's, the Jeff's and Martha's, the Don's and Dorothy's – who in word and deed, seek to do everything in the name of Jesus - Yes, we honor the Choirs – and rightly so - because they help us sing the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God that mark our worship. But you, by your faithfulness in your daily lives, you, are the people, the congregation, the true choir that produces the music of faithfulness that is the goal of our Church.

Are we growing right now? Not as we could and should - even as our school population falls all around us - but we have a message, and we have the melody of our faithfulness to share.

And I cannot affirm you enough - This June you are proving your commitments – Two years of giving to the Building to Share Campaign – with a full report next Week - Hosting SOS, Paying for and helping build a Habitat House in Pontiac, and, and, giving of your time, week in and week out, In ministries of care.

You are the Body of Christ in this place – and as we make a joyful noise to the Lord through our lives we will draw others in, even as we grow deeper in our own relationship with God. .

Thank you this Sunday to all who lead us in the songs of our faith, and for all of you who truly are the choir that carries the tune and the message into God's good world.

Yes – Come Sing, O Church, In Joy! Amen.

David W. Robertson, Pastor