

Theme for 2020

I AM WHAT ‘YOU’ SEE!

‘LORD, Open My Eyes, Help Me Believe, I Am What YOU See.’

“Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light... Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother’s womb. I thank you, High God—you’re breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration—what a creation! You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something. Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you. The days of my life all prepared before I’d even lived one day. Your thoughts—how rare, how beautiful! God, I’ll never comprehend them! I couldn’t even begin to count them—any more than I could count the sand of the sea. Oh, let me rise in the morning and live always with you.”

Matthew 6:22 (MSG); Psalm 139:13-18 (MSG)



This Week’s Thought – October 25, 2020

“After this he went out and saw a tax-collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he got up, left everything, and followed him.” **Luke 5:27-28 (NRSV)**

“We’re ALL in this TOGETHER.” Though we are still very much in the midst of a challenging pandemic season, over the past few weeks I’ve found myself reflecting upon the early months of this year, especially the first few weeks of the pandemic. I recall reading a headline or two about a virus that was rapidly spreading in China; yet seemed so distant and removed from my everyday life that I must confess I paid little to no attention to it. Yet within a matter of days our entire world was upended, and we all found ourselves quarantined and sheltered in our homes, afraid for our own health and those we love. Added to this was the economic impact of this pandemic, with millions unemployed (whether due to layoff, furlough, closure, etc.), and overnight financial markets crumbling everywhere we turned.

While you may have experienced the exact details of these events differently, the remarkable thing about this pandemic is I am fairly confident for the most part, that you can relate to the sense of confusion and disruption. So, here is the question for all of us to ponder today, especially with a bit of distance now between us and those early days of this pandemic: **how did you respond when your world was threatened and even turned upside down?**

October 25, 2020

As I have stated or maybe asked you in some form or another, one of the best questions I’ve been asked in recent years is, “*What comes out when you are squeezed?*” If I am being honest, when I was ‘squeezed’ this spring, a desire for stability and self-protection came out. My thoughts quickly turned to my employment. My wife’s employment and her being deemed an ‘essential worker’, thus having to report in each day. My children’s situation with school and their social interruptions. My parent’s health, wellness, safety and protection. My brother, sister and their families. The church body and church functions. On and on the list could go and with each of these threats I found myself thinking of a myriad of ‘*what if scenarios*’ and ‘*what now*’ unsure of any outcomes from the situation. Was this response motivated out of love for my family, loved ones, the church, etc. and a desire to protect them? Of course! Yet, while you may have thought or felt the same way in response for your yourself, your loved ones, family, friends, etc., and given the great American virtue of a deeply rooted sense of self-protection and self-sufficiency, is this the way the Lord would want us to immediately think and feel as His Children?

From our scripture verse, when Jesus calls Levi, he upends his entire world. Though hated by his Jewish peers for working with and for the Romans, Levi would have had significant economic and vocational stability. When Jesus says, “*Follow me,*” he invites Levi out of his comfortable and predictable life and into the joyous adventure of following Him. How does Levi respond? “*He got up, left everything, and followed him.*”

As a deliberative and calculating person, Levi’s response is honestly a bit unsettling to me. Yet, increasingly I wonder if “*unsettling*” is exactly what our Lord is aiming for with each and every one of us? Jesus longs to “*unsettle*” us from our self-assured complacency and reliance upon things of this world for our sense of comfort, protection, and self-worth. What would it look like for us to hear and respond to this invitation, and like Levi, leave everything and follow the call of Jesus upon our lives?

“I am who You say I am! I am God’s workmanship, created in Christ unto good works. (Ephesians 2:10) I am an ambassador for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). I am part of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people (1 Peter 2:9). I am greatly loved by God (Ephesians 2:4; Colossians 3:12). I AM WHAT ‘YOU’SEE!”

Application: What came out when you were squeezed this spring or rather when something came about that turned your world upside down? How has this pandemic revealed an ungodly attachment to material goods, or the pursuit of earthly pleasures? In this season, let each of us learn more to follow God with all that we have, trusting that He is good and loves us more than we even know how to love ourselves.

Prayer of reflection you might pray this week: “Sometimes Lord I don’t even know what to say, especially when I am caught in the midst of my faith being shaken, but when I am going through a difficult time in what touches the depth of my belief and I am almost tempted to give in to impatience and despair; something within me cries out for You. So, Lord I open my heart, my mind and my spirit to You. Give me the courage to face the future with certainty and the wisdom to follow in the footsteps of Your Son forever. This is my prayer in the matchless, wonderful and compassionate name of Jesus, Amen!”

Yours in Christ, Pastor King