

Leesburg United Methodist Church

Message Map February 5, 2012

“Pay Attention”

(The “Attention” of a Five-Talent Follower-4th in the Five-Talent Follower series)

Rev. Jim Wishmyer

Scripture Reference: Philippians 4:1-9

Prayer requests, insights, questions, things to do that I'd like to remember from today:



Trail Guide -- Week of February 6, 2012 – “Hugging the Trail”

Robert Nicoll writes, “The peace of God is the garrison of the soul in all the experiences of its life, defending it from the external assaults of temptation or anxiety, and disciplining all lawless desires and imaginations within, that wage war against its higher purposes.”¹

Many today live hurried, worried, frantic and frenetic lives. Any dream of peace gets lost in the countless details and duties of everyday living. We think we can only experience peace when the circumstances around us become conducive. The Apostle Paul, who lived a full and active life, learned that the secret of peace comes not by slowing life down to a crawl, but by centering one’s life in Christ. As you read this week’s scripture, look for the clues to 1) making room for the peace God gives, 2) what it is, 3) how to experience it, and 5) how to continue to experience it.

Mon, 2/6 **Philippians 4:4** You can do it. You can memorize this verse. Read it. Read it aloud. Again. Now say it without looking. Again. “Rejoice *in the LORD*.” To rejoice is “to take delight”. In other words, look carefully, closely and continually at Christ. Take your attention off your situation and spend some time thinking about Christ. As one writer put it: “Keep your gaze on God; your glance on your problems.” Magnify Christ, not your difficulties. Step 1.

Tues, 2/7 **Philippians 4:5** Okay, you did it yesterday, do it again today. Memorize these words and carry them through your day, “The Lord is near.” You can think of “near” temporally; try thinking of “near” spatially. Christ IS near – near to you. Right now. Whatever you have to face today, remember: “The Lord is near.” Step 2. Review Step 1.

Wed, 2/8 **Philippians 4:6** By now, you know the drill. Go ahead, memorize: “Do not be anxious about anything, but...” Warren Wiersbe points out that the Old English root from which we get our word “worry” means “to strangle”. Relying on the help of the God you magnify, the Christ who is near, choose to *not let yourself be strangled* by your concerns. How? By immediately praying about whatever worries you. Express your worry, your doubt, your fear, your problem, - whatever directly to God. Do it now. Do it often. And, **do** say “thank you!” Step 3. Review 1&2.

Thurs, 2/9 **Philippians 4:7** By now, you don’t need reminding, right? Read it; speak it; memorize it. “And the peace of God...” When we make room, God comes in. Always. Let God’s peace “garrison” your soul. Step 4. Review Steps 1, 2 & 3.

Fri, 2/10 **Philippians 4:8-9** A bit more challenging, but give these verses a try. Read, speak, memorize. The value of memorization is that you are “planting” God’s word in the soil of your conscious & subconscious mind for the Holy Spirit to water, nurture and call forth as needed. We often fall into the trap of thinking, “What’s the harm in this?” or “I don’t see anything wrong with this.” These verses urge us instead to think, “What’s right in this?” and “Is this God’s best for me/for others?” Train your mind by filling it with what is best and thus find your attitude and actions being transformed! Step 5. Review Steps 1- 4 time permitting.

Sat, 2/11 Review whatever insights you’ve gained; the verses you’ve memorized; the Steps you learned. Tell a friend what you’ve been reading and learning. Pray: Sunday worship & activities.

(1 – Nicoll, Robertson, The Expositor’s Greek New Testament, Vol. 3, p.468)

LUMC – Five-Week Five-Talent Challenge – Update #2 – Thanks be to God!

1/29/2012

Hi Pastor Jim,

First of all I want to thank you. LUMC is a true blessing in my life.

Several weeks ago, I re-committed my life to Christ during our re-connect Sunday. It has been an eye-opening experience daily since then. Many things in my life are becoming clearer; some not as I would choose them to be and many not easy actions to take, but with a renewed strength in my Lord, I am faithfully trying to follow His will and NOT mine! (I have a lot of work to do!) J

Now, for our talent quest...after prayerful consideration, and with the help of my 6 year old, son, Nicholas, we are going to make and sell "UNIQUE" LUMC t-shirts. They will be unique (first of all because I am NOT a professional or even great at art!) and second because each shirt will have "LUMC" on it somewhere but the rest of the shirts will be different...no 2 will be the same! It costs \$5 to make each shirt, so I'm thinking about selling them for \$8 each (all sizes except 2XL which will be \$10 each). That's \$3/shirt gain for the church.

Thanks so much for this challenge Pastor Jim. It's helping me with my daily re-commitment and it's also great to work with my son on such a special project. PS...I think it will be a blessing when others wear and see the LUMC shirts!

Blessings always, Debbie Brooks

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1/30/2012

Dear Jim,

My 5 Talents story just went full circle and I wanted to share it with you. My friend Becky Hart was severely burned last spring on Memorial Day weekend from a product called Fire Gel that has since been recalled. That same weekend a young man named Michael Hubbard was also burned with the same gel fuel product. He is in NY and Becky's family and his family have gotten acquainted through their posts on Caring Bridge (an online service that lets you leave posts for individuals who have loved ones in the hospital). As you know, my friend Becky has since recovered and has been home with her family now since September. Her doctors view her recovery as a miracle. Michael, unfortunately is not doing as well.

Early in his recovery he suffered cardiac arrest & was not able to be resuscitated for 13 minutes. He suffered brain damage due to the lack of oxygen. He now has physical and mental disabilities as a result. He is still at Blythdale Children's Hospital in NY, and has been there since last May.

Becky forwarded an email to me about Michael and his mother this past November. The email was from Michael's aunt requesting friends and family to please send Nancy (Michael's mother) \$1. Nancy apparently just started a new job shortly before Michael's accident and had to quit so she could be by her son's side in the hospital and to help with his recovery.

I saved the email and meant to send some money once the holidays were over, but it unfortunately slipped my mind. That is, until you gave out the \$5 in church a couple of weeks ago. I decided I would buy an encouraging card and write a nice note and mail the \$5 to Nancy so she could at least go out and get a cup of coffee with a friend. I mailed the card last Tuesday. I didn't put my address on the envelope, I only wrote "A Friend of Becky Hart", Broadlands, VA. I signed only my first name on the inside and told Nancy that I was praying for her and for Michael, and that I heard of her story from Becky.

Today my friend Becky sent me an email telling me I was an "angel" -- that Nancy left a post on "Caring Bridge" that she received an encouraging card from "a friend of Becky Hart" named Ann. Below is part of the post:

***Friends** They come from all overlifetime, new, acquaintances, best, work, a friend of a friend..... and friends of Becky Hart, a burn victim of this terrible Fire Gel - Well a wonderful friend of hers sent us a beautiful card sending positive thoughts and a nice note and signed it Ann...*

...I think of all the people who are my friends and ones I have let go because they really where not my friend at all. And friends who I now have as angels watching over us.

Friendship and caring about others is a wonderful feeling I'm blessed to say we have this in our life. I never imagined just how much a friend would mean to me in times like this but its everything. To me telling my friend Sue what I'm really feeling on a late email and her giving me words of wisdom and love in return, To me crying to my sister and her saying let's pray and tomorrow will be a better day, God gives us people...

So we look to today to see what new friend or letter or just an e-mail from a friend to make us smile and feel good that God validates this friendship with Love. May he continue to bless all of us with old and new true friends to help us through our day and praying its an easy and happy one.....

GOD BLESS! - Nancy

Jim,

I didn't expect to ever hear back from this woman--I didn't give her my address. But because of Caring Bridge and my friend Becky, I was able to read what an impact a simple act made on someone. And she was thoughtful enough to post it so maybe I would find out.

Thank you for the opportunity to share :) - Ann DellaCorte

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1/31/2012

I took my \$5, put another \$5 in the envelope, and gave it to the manager of the Salvation Army's Family Thrift Store on Cardinal Park Drive. I explained what our congregation was doing, and asked her to choose a shopper whom she recognizes as a regular visitor to the store -- someone truly in need, not someone with more resources who might have dropped in once to browse. When the person comes to the register with his or her items, the manager will explain that \$10 has been donated toward that purchase, by someone who supports the Salvation Army, is blessed himself, and wants to help others in need in the name of Jesus Christ. Renee, the manager, was enthusiastic about the idea, and happy to help. She made a note on her calendar, giving herself a time limit to carry out my request, and is looking forward to telling me how it plays out.

Bill Henry