

Daily Bread: Nourishment and Info from Your Pastors
April 1, 2020

April Fool Joke:

Why was 6 afraid of 7?

I dunno, why?

Because 7 8 9.

[funnier if read aloud]

Devotion

22 But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. James 1:22 (NRSV)

I served Wesley UMC in Wareham, MA as a student/pastor from 1984-1988. I learned a lot during those four years...and not all of what I learned was from Boston University. In that church was an older woman who occasionally chided me when I got too academic. She'd say: "You know Pastor, it's possible to be so heavenly minded that you're of no earthly good!" I got it. At some point, the rubber of my seminary training needed to meet the road or it was all for naught.

When life is buzzing along at the pace we've been used to until the last three weeks, it's so easy to confine the practice of our faith to a few memorized table graces or nightly prayers and one hour on Sunday. However, at the pace we're now experiencing, we have been given some time to reflect on what "earthly good" our faith is doing or not doing.

A common description of a Charles Wesley hymn was that they "always begin on earth and end in heaven" (*Practical Divinity* by Thomas Langford). They also always *connect* heaven and earth. Consider the first and last verses of Wesley's famous hymn, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling."

*Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.*

*Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be,
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee;*

*Changed from glory into to glory, till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love and praise.*

Wesley reminds us that when we make room for Christ the “joy of heaven to earth comes down.” Heaven and earth are connected. James warns us that when we believe hearing *about* Jesus is enough, we deceive ourselves. Instead, we’re called to *be doers* of the words he spoke. When faith becomes action, heaven and earth connect and we’re given a glimpse of the Kingdom of God. May you answer Jesus’ call to be of “earthly good” to someone this week.

Peace, Pastor Jon

Prayer: Creator God, through our baptism we’ve been infused with the Holy Spirit; through our faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, we’ve been offered the gift of new life in Christ. Bless us in your service. May we be for our community the Body of Christ redeemed by his blood. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Ideas and Information:

- We received a note from the Teachers and Staff of St. Mary’s School. It reads: *Thank you so much for the generous donation of books for our students! What a lovely thought. Some of our students have already been able to read or listen to a book being read to them! Thank you and Blessings to all.* Let’s remember to thank God for our “Change a Child’s Story” ministry and fund which purchases a book for every elementary student in Humboldt. And, let’s thank God for our mission committee who organizes and distributes the books.
- Easter greetings videos are welcome. Please take a video of you and your family sending Easter greetings to your church friends you haven’t seen in awhile. Give them a shout out by name. We don’t need anymore than 30 seconds. Please email them to either jdisburg@gmail.com or finance-administration... ,
- The Council of Bishops has given permission to local churches to offer “online communion” during Holy Week/Easter at the local ordained pastor’s discretion. We have decided that we will not offer this. Instead, when we can gather together in person, we will offer communion in all centers. Though Pastor Jon would love to explain how an “online” sacrament destroys our Wesleyan incarnational theology, we’ll just say we don’t find this to be either

an edifying, a unifying or a faithful representation of the Body and Blood of Christ. A colleague of ours has established a hashtag for those of us who will not offer this: #realcommunionisworthwaitingfor.