

19 February 2017 - Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

Readings: Lev. 19:1-2, 9-18; 1 Cor. 3:10-11, 16-23; Mt. 5:38-48.

INTRO: Review: Humble, Emotionally honest, Teachable, Proactive, Forgiving, Pure motives. *The Arena of Healing, Part 4* – Mt. 5:9-11.



I. HEALING LOVE.

Matthew 5:9, “Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God.”

Lifekeys: “*I am determined to be reconciled to God and reconciled to others. I will seek to restore, as far as lies in me, every broken relationship. I am setting my heart to bless others and do them good, no matter who they may be.*”

Romans 12:18, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live **peaceably** with all.”

2 Corinthians 5:18-20, “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and **gave us** the ministry of **reconciliation**; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and **entrusting to us** the message of reconciliation. Therefore, **we are ambassadors for Christ**, God making his appeal through us. **We implore you** on behalf of Christ, **be reconciled to God.**” **MSG**: “God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God’s work of making things right between them. We’re speaking for Christ himself now: **Become friends with God**; he’s already a friend with you.”

Matthew 5:41, “If anyone forces you to go one mile, **go with him two miles.**”

Lifekeys: “**Relationship** (not religion) is our ultimate calling in life.”

Illus. Gary Ablett Jr. “It’s about a relationship with God.”



II. COURAGE.

Matthew 5:10-12, “Blessed are **those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”

Lifekeys: *“I am determined to pursue that which is right and pursue wholeness, no matter what the cost. With or without the approval of others, I am determined to press forward and do the right thing. I determine to be undeterred by emotional pressures, spiritual pressures or the pressure of others who would prefer me to remain as I am.”* Cf.

Song: *“I have decided to follow Jesus...”*

God’s

promise: “If they persecuted me, **they will also persecute you.**” (John 15:20). “What?! You’re NOT being persecuted?!”

Three things that work against us: the world, the flesh and the devil.

1. Bless the world. “But I say to you, **Love** your enemies and **pray** for those who persecute you.” (Mt. 5:44). “**Bless** those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.” (Rom. 12:14).

2. Bury the flesh.

“So don’t you see that we don’t owe this old do-it-yourself life one red cent. There’s nothing in it for us, nothing at all. The best thing to do is **give it a decent burial** and get on with your new life.” (Romans 8:13).

3. Resist the devil. “Submit yourselves therefore to God.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7).

Leviticus 19:2, “You shall **be holy** for I the Lord your God am holy.”

Holy = whole. **Matthew 5:48**, “You therefore must **be perfect**, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Perfect = wholly integrated.



CONCLUSION: James 1:2-4, “Count it all joy, my brothers (and sisters) when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” *The Legacy of Luther*, “Luther believed that trials in the life of the believer, especially a theologian, are necessary in order to grow in the truth... Luther thanked the devil and papists for ‘beating, oppressing and distressing’ him to the point that they turned him into ‘a fairly good theologian.’” God’s goal for each of us. Amen.