

Preacher Appreciation Sunday

October 22, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled "Preacher Appreciation Sunday." Thank you to Rhonda, Ed, Dave, Jim, and Don for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Romans 10:12 to 15. Happy birthday to Caitrin, Ivy and Ellis and happy anniversary to Debby and Len.

Welcome, Announcements & Prayer

Oh, look who's coming in. Hello Doug. Welcome. Tina has a birthday. Earl don't forget. Good. And Doug is here, and he's here for an important reason. He's here because his parents are about to celebrate their 70th anniversary. That's a long time to be married and they've been married a long time and they've been a wonderful example to all of us for a long time and we've all, we've all learned from them, and all appreciated them and they're an example of what a marriage should be and what a Christian should be, and we totally love them. Alicia and Justin who were here last summer to visit all of us, they have moved to France to work with the Marseille congregation and there's a report is on the mission board at the back of the auditorium if you'd like to read that, or you can get it through the digital bulletin.

Exciting news: Helene. Helene and Daniel. You know Helene and Daniel? Well, Helene found out that her parents have their, her family has been approved to come to Canada. And we don't know where. Canada's a big country, so they could be anywhere and not a hundred percent sure when. We think they're come—they're departing on this coming Wednesday but we're not a hundred percent sure on that either. So anyway, they are going to come and I'm sure no matter when they come or where they come Helene's going to be very thrilled and exciting. John and Glynnis have a new baby, Adelaide—born to Lindsey and Daniel not to John and Glynnis as it may have sounded at first. Er, and Dianne's not feeling well this week so we pray for her, and Jack and Marie are both not doing well so they're, Marie's not with us today.

Today is Thanksgiving Day and there's many people we're thankful for on Thanksgiving Day that are, that are in our midst. We're thankful for Don and for all that he does for our congregation. We're thankful for our elders and all they do for our congregation. And we're thankful for, for our staff. For, for Pam and our nice clean, consistently clean building and she's carried, she's—the torch was passed to her and she's carried it well. We so appreciate her, and Adam. Our special Adam. I, maybe I'm biased but I think he's pretty special. He—he's our maintenance person, he's our treasurer, he's our worship leader, he's our all-round good guy. He gets paid for a little bit of that but a lot of it is volunteer work and we really appreciate him. So there's my, my Thanksgiving thanks. And let us pray.

Thank you, God, so much for all the blessings that we have in this world. And thank you for the blessing of Jesus, and thank you for the, the grace that we have because of him. And thank you for the people in our congregation who do so much and, and thank you for Janet (who I forgot to mention) who is always doing so much and has blessed us with this beautiful Thanksgiving decoration this morning. And, and for, for so many people who, who are so good. And, and thank you for Johnny and Jo and the example that they've been to us for so many years and, and for the, the joy that they have in their lives, no

matter what their circumstances. They still, they still carry on and, and see things positively and, and we appreciate them so much. In Jesus' name. amen.

Communion

It takes only a casual observer of world news to know that when we get the news, north, east, west, and south, then most of our—most often the news is negative. Bad things are happening. All sorts of evil, aggressive, aggressive behavior. Violence, hateful actions. Even though the news focuses on these acts that represent only a small number of people yet demonstrates, demonstrates what humans are capable of.

This week, for instance, there was a village in the in Ukraine that was bombed by Russian missiles and dozens of people were killed, many of which were children. Okay, so there's a community that's been destroyed. For what purpose? Who was, who is responsible for that order, that they bomb that that town? And the carnage that results from that action affects people for the rest of their lives. The ones that have, have, that were not killed. And it's tragedy for those who were killed. So, what army general made the order and who followed the orders and how did they feel about that? Historians estimate that 1.1 million people were killed at Auschwitz during the Second World War. 1 million Jews approximately 70 to 75,000 Polish citizens, 20,000 gypsies, 15,000 Soviet POWs, 10 to 15,000 prisoners from other ethnic groups. I'm not trying to analyze this behavior, only demonstrate that we as human beings are capable of such behavior. Damage that includes death and grief.

One of the most sobering things you can do is to go to Ottawa and go up in the Peace Tower and there's a room in there. And they have books open, and there's just names and hometowns. These thick books where hundreds of thousands of Canadians who've perished during several world wars and other skirmishes. For every name there's a family, there's a community that was affected by that action. You see, we are capable of sin each day. All of us. Maybe not to the magnitude that I've alluded to here.

Today a friend (Dale) posted the message this week reflecting on the study of a book entitled The Wisdom Jesus by Cynthia Bourgeault. I've often thought of teaching the Sermon on the Mount at Great Lakes. For 35 times over the years, every time I went through there, through that study I, there was something I had missed before. You just keep going back. It just keeps informing you as you have your life decisions and circumstances. But this book talks about the wisdom Jesus as a wisdom teacher. The good news of Jesus is life transforming. It's a life-transforming gospel. My friend Dale shared a quote from this book that's worth considering today:

Could it be that this earthly realm, not in spite of but because of its difficulties, frustrations, and even tragedies, offers precisely the condition for the expression of certain aspects of divine love that become real in no other way? The world does indeed show forth what love is like in particularly intense and costly ways, but when we look at this process more deeply we can see that those sharp edges we experience as constrictions at the same time call forth some of the most exquisite demonstration of love. Qualities such as steadfastness and tenderness and commitment and forbearance and fidelity and forgiveness. Indeed, Jesus died to point us to this loving God and loving our neighbors even in deep, difficult

circumstances. He died for such to be such a saving purpose. Something to be daily part of our Thanksgiving. (Bourgeault)

Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we are thankful for the deep love Jesus'you have for humanity that you would send part of yourself to this world to demonstrate to all of us that you love us that you care for us that you want us to be the human beings that you created in your image that we might be all about love no matter what the circumstances that come we come across in our lives we pray father that you might embolden us to be your people that we be your hands and your feet that we be our words your words and your message and that we live lives with attitudes that bring honor and glory to you we're thankful for Jesus for this sacrifice that we remember this morning that's that saves us from ourselves saves us from the sin that we commit each day for this grace and mercy we give you thanks as we partake of the bread and the wine this morning in Jesus' name, amen.

Presentation

Thanksgiving makes us look at what we have and appreciate what we have. We're grateful and appreciate what is around us, and especially the people. Today just happens to be "Minister Appreciation Day," and in my rudimentary study of our congregation's history, the church at Beamsville has been around for 191 years. That's to make you feel really old. Now, Don is not. I believe Don is the longest-serving minister of our 191-year history. He has been with us for 28 plus years. We are grateful for Don and Barb. For their continued service. We appreciate not just the duration but the stability that the work that they do and especially Don's work. Visiting, preaching, teaching, and much more. Quietly; behind the scenes. We exhort: Keep up the good work and please accept this as a token of our appreciation. Thank you.

Scripture Reading

Romans 10:12-15

Good morning. Our scripture reading this morning is from Romans 10 12 to 15. For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. The same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on him, on the name of the Lord will be saved." How then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news."

Sermon

Preacher Appreciation Sunday

Good morning, everyone. Thank you very much for being with us today. Thank you for the kind words that were mentioned as well. Throughout many churches today we celebrate thanksgiving and the second Sunday in October is called Pastor Appreciation Weekend and I have often thought about many of the ministers that I have loved and adored over the years. Some who are still living, some who have passed away. Many of you will recall some of these names like the wonderful, dynamic, beautiful preacher Lynn Anderson. Dr. Charles Stanley who just passed away recently. Still preaching up until his age of 90. The incomparable C.G. McPhee who was an amazing minister. He kept your attention whether you wanted to or not. Joe Cannon, humorous. Murray Hammond.

And then from the scriptures, ourselves we often think of the Bible as 'the Bible' and don't really think about the people who wrote it. Matthew, an incredible man who writes five major discourses in his book, all celebrating the life of Jesus. And then Mark's gospel, a brief gospel but all about belief. John's gospel, of course, is that of love. But I love the book of Luke. Dr. Luke who cared about people. Spiritually, physically, made sure they had enough food to eat. It's in our Bible class even right now. Really wonderful. And then there's a preacher whose name is Chuck Swindoll. I had the privilege of spending a little bit of time with him a number of years ago and I came across one of his articles and I thought it was good and I think you would appreciate hearing it. He said,

I remember it well: Christmas of '58 on Okinawa. I was homesick, missing my wife, and counting the days. So when the veteran entertainer sang his closing song, I sang along with him in a flood of memories. I recall how grateful I was for that tour of duty: the lessons I had learned, the disciplines I had begun to employ (thanks to the Navigators), the books I had read, the missionaries I had met, the places I had visited, the journal I had kept, the letters I had written, the verses I had memorized, even the things I had witnessed inside a Marine Corps barracks! And, most importantly, the call I had received from God to enter ministry.

Looking back now, all I can do is smile . . . and sing, "Thanks for the memories." I'm doing that a lot these days as I recall the various things God has done in me and through me and for me—and sometimes in spite of me! And I can't help but give Him praise in my heart.

Pastoring a church has to be the highest of all callings. In this position, one has the privilege of touching life at its tenderest points . . . of walking with pain through its darkest valleys . . . of proclaiming truth in its purest form . . . of confronting sin in its ugliest scenes . . . of modeling integrity through its hardest extremes—while everyone is watching as well as when no one is looking. It is no wonder to me why it requires a God-given calling before one enters it or why such a struggle accompanies resignation from it.

And after all these years I say a resounding, "Thanks for the memories!" For the conversions that have occurred, the addictions that have been conquered, the marriages that have been restored, the fractured lives that have been mended. These memories stay with me and revisit me often as I thank Him for His faithfulness. (Swindoll)

So I just want to share a couple of thoughts. Being minister for now some 45 years, 28 years here, as was mentioned and it's still a lovely thing for me. I enjoy it very, very much. Part of being a minister is giving thanks—and of course this is Thanksgiving weekend—and receiving thanks. I began full-time ministry in 1978 and I've preached in various churches over the years and I continue to enjoy my now 45 years of preaching, and the 28 years I've been at this congregation. I very much enjoy it and I always look forward to the future and what God has plans for us. It's amazing what God does. While I was attending GLCC as a student if someone had ever said to me that "Don, you're going to be a preacher one day and you will be the preacher of the Beamsville Church of Christ for a lengthy period of time," I would have not believed it but God has his own plans for us.

There have been so many mentors for me. I was very fortunate to have a preacher as a father. My dad preached for a lot of years and I so enjoyed the conversations that we would have. Interesting, after one of his sermons or one of mine, we'd talk about something. Next thing we knew it was an hour later. Thinking 'oh yeah, we're supposed to be home at lunchtime. Sorry about that,' and just the, the conversations of sharing ministry and unique times. And there have been so many mentors for me. My father. Again I've mentioned Lynn Anderson and a wonderful man who's still preaching in his 80s now, his name is Foy Anderson. He was a wonderful teacher at Bible college when I attended and a wonderful, wonderful friend. My father, as I said, and various others are wonderful preachers. Jim McGuigan, Dr. Charles Stanley, Landon Saunders.

But I also want to say something about my sweet wife. A preacher's wife carries a large load. For many years, I would be gone preaching gospel meetings and she would be at home with three babies. Working away, doing her best. And Barb would take care of everything. Taking care of the children, paying the bills, dealing with all the chores that have to be done. Phone calls from people needing help. And preaching also requires the guidance of the Holy Spirit. A deep love and curiosity of scripture. The love of God and the presence of Jesus. No preacher worth his salt can do anything well without God's Holy Spirit. And through all of this I give God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit so much thanks and I rejoice.

And again we have scripture that teaches this. We rejoice being Christians. It's important. Rejoice in the Lord always. and that's not easy. I'll say it again though: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. And then this command: Don't be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God. And then something that all of us have felt I'm sure: And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, finally. Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable. If anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things. And whatever you've learned or received or heard from me or seen in me put it into practice and the God of peace will be with you. And because of this we give thanks. Very brief lesson today. Thanksgiving taking place, let me just read a couple of scriptures regarding thanks.

Second Corinthians: But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of God. Wow, that is incredible! What God gives to us so that we can share with others even if it's just a thank you or loving kindness. 1st Thessalonians 5: be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. And sometimes when the circumstances don't work out, we wonder why and then days go by, weeks go by, months go by, and things get settled and life changes again. Often remembering what God said. His promise: I will never leave you. Never. I will never forsake you. Never. I am with you always. Always. And then this marvelous picture in the apocalyptic book of Revelation. I don't know what they look like but here's what it says: The living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives forever and ever.

Or then way back in the Psalms. 95: Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song, which we're doing today. And then Psalm 100: Enter his gates (maybe we could say the church building) enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. And then not easy to do but important. Do not be anxious about anything (I haven't mastered that) but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your request to God. And then 1st Timothy 4: God created food

and it's good, to be received with thanksgiving. Give thanks on thanksgiving and this preacher says thank you so much for all of the years and a few more years to come. Amen.

Closing Prayer

God, it has been good to get together this morning, to praise the power of your name, to give thanks for so many blessings that we have. We thank you God for the privilege we have to get together. We thank you for our leadership in in this congregation; for, for Don and for the elders. We thank you for the guidance they give us. We thank you for the lessons that Don has brought us, for the expounding on your word that he shares, for his insights. We thank you for the support that he and his family have given for so many years. We ask that you might continue to guide us and to guide him to bring us in line with what you have in mind. God, we close this morning with, with Isaiah's words of, of thanksgiving: How beautiful and delightful on the mountains are the feet of the one who brings good news, who announces peace, who brings good news of good things. Who announces salvation and says to us your God reigns. Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices. Together they shout for joy for they will see face-to-face the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth and shout joyfully together for the Lord has comforted his people and he has redeemed us. The Lord has bared his holy arm (his infinite power) before the eyes of all the nations, revealing himself as the one by whom we are redeemed from captivity. That all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of God. It's in Christ's name we pray, amen. Have a good week, everybody.

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