

Everybody Hurts

September 1, 2024

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled, "Everybody Hurts." Thank you to Ed, Paul, Jim, and Don for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Psalm 15, 1 to 4.

Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Good morning, everybody. It's nice to know that there were some survivors of the lightning storm and thunder that we had overnight. Welcome. As far as birthdays go, we've got one birthday. Ruth has a birthday this week, and anniversaries, Dave and Lynn, and Kathy and Earl.

Job opportunity, GLCHS is hiring a female and male dorm parents, and if you're interested in that or know somebody that might be interested in it, if you could pass that word along, and they're looking for a physics and technology teacher.

Over the last couple of weeks, we've had a Bible study going on Wednesday night, the Psalms of Jesus. Everyone's welcome. We're meeting in the library.

Prayer requests, safe travel for Helene and the girls as they visit Halifax and for Jeff as he drives and helps them get there. Continued prayers for those who are mourning the Kirkland family, for Phyllis, the Cook family for Madeleine, the Ellis, Whitfield, and Smith families for Kendra. And I was reading this morning that Nora Ellis, who's married to Gordon Ellis in Thunder Bay passed away this past week. Some of you might know her. Let's pray.

Our Father in Heaven, we're thankful for the opportunity today that we can be together to honor you and to draw closer to you through prayer and through scriptures and through sermons and communion and through our singing. We pray that all that we do will honor you and also build each other up.

We're thankful for this opportunity that we can be here and we pray our blessing on it. We pray your blessing on those who recently have lost significant people in their lives due to passing on. We're confident, Father, that you have them safe in your arms, but sometimes those who are left have an adjustment and we pray for that adjustment. And we pray that people will not be afraid of you or afraid of death, that they might face it with confidence.

We pray, Father, that it was a thankful heart for your son who came and paid a price for us. And we remember him this morning in our communion time. We pray that you'll be with us and guide us and that your spirit will build us up as we live our lives for you. We pray, Father, for opportunities this week that we might face, that we might honor you in what we do and say, and that we are pleasing to you as we love our neighbors and love you. Pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.

Communion

What is odd about Dallas and Indianapolis? I could make joke about their football teams, but I actually don't know that much about football, so that could be wrong. Anyone have an idea at all? What's odd in terms of cities in North America about Dallas and Indianapolis? They're the two largest cities in North America that are not on any navigable waterways. Think about both cities. They're not on big rivers. They're not on lakes or bays or on an ocean line or anything. It is amazing if you look through human history how important water is to humans, a civilization and individually.

A couple of important reasons. Until railways, shipment by boat was the easiest way to move people in goods. Water is a whole lot easier to move things over than cart and trail and path. We were just up north, up new Liskeard Way. You can't imagine trying to get through that forest. You're taking your logs back. If you didn't have that wonderful big river that goes all the way down to the St. Lawrence.

Second, it's a good food source. If you're building a city, it's great to be on a big river, lake or ocean because you've got fish. You've got other things you can eat, things I don't want to eat, but other people might eat them.

Thirdly and perhaps most obviously, it's a source of water. Us humans need water to live. Water is very important for life. We can actually live quite a while without food. We may not think that or want to think that, but it is actually possible to go a while without food. It is really not possible to go very long without water. We really need water to live.

Have you ever been really thirsty? Desperately thirsty. So I lived in Arkansas for a while. I grew up here in southern Ontario. I had no knowledge of the south. I had never visited there before. Me and a young gentleman from St. Catharines found ourselves driving down late August one year to go to school in Arkansas.

We were doing the rather uninformed college student thing where we were late and we filled up the gas in the car in Ohio and didn't stop until we had to fill up the gas again mid-afternoon in southern Kentucky, opened the door and both immediately shut the door real quick because we went, "What is that weird thing in the air?" The soup, the thick, thick humidity and heat we had never experienced before in our lives.

A couple weeks down there, I'm a hiker. I'm a nature person. So we were close to the Ozarks. Not very far away. I'm out on a hike in the Ozarks one afternoon and up on the top, it's breezy. It's not too bad. But then you get down into the hollers, down in the trees and the breeze goes away and the air stops moving. And before I knew it, I was starting to see double. I was sweating profusely and then I stopped sweating.

By the time I got back to the car, I had a case of bottle of water in the back, which was hot, but it tasted so good. I don't think I've ever had a bottle of water that wasn't that good in my life before. That's as close as I've ever been to the idea of thirst and quenching that thirst.

Jesus is life-giving water. John 4, 10 through 14, talks about Jesus giving a living water that gives eternal life, which we will never thirst again. John 7, 38, Jesus talks about whoever believes in him has living water flowing within. An alternate translation of that could be, if you believe in Jesus, then living water flows out of you.

Jesus offers living water that results in us never thirsting again and brings eternal life to us. This is what we're reminding ourselves, participating in, and hopefully going forward in today at Communion, Lord's Supper. We're partaking of that living water, reminding ourselves that we don't thirst ever again, and hopefully that that water then flows out of us to those around us. I think both of those meetings in John 7, 38 are true. He both provides the flow of living water within us, and then we also then flow out of us because of him, the living water to those around us.

So today I encourage us to think about that living water that comes through Jesus, that eternal life that comes through Jesus, and perhaps those around us that we might affect that flow of living water. Let's pray.

Dear Lord, thank you for all you've given us and all you've blessed us with. Thank you for this day. We thank you for your son. We thank you that he came to this world, that he died for our sins, and that he ascended to you. We thank you that he provides the living water in our lives that gives us eternal life. Help us to remember him, participate with him in a meaningful way, in Jesus' name, amen.

Scripture Reading

Psalm 15:1-4

Morning. Our reading this morning is Psalms 15, 1-4.

"Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain? The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart. Whose tongue utters no slander? Who does no wrong to a neighbor and casts no slur on others? Who despises a vile person who honors those who fear the Lord, who keeps an oath even when it hurts and does not change their mind?"

Sermon

Everybody Hurts

Thank you everyone for being with us today. Some of you would recognize the name Charles Swindoll. Wonderful man, wonderful preacher, wonderful theologian. And he wrote these words called "Deep Grief."

"The past couple of weeks have been some of the toughest of my life. My emotions have spanned the spectrum. Shock, sorrow, horror, intense anger, betrayal, disillusionment, disappointment, and utter bewilderment. I have prayed without much benefit. I have read the scriptures from the Psalms and Proverbs to the words of Jesus in various sections of the letters from Paul and Peter and James. But without much peace. When something terrible happens that you can't understand, grief wraps its tentacles around you, squeezing and sucking every little bit of energy and joy that you may have been holding in reserve over all these weeks and months. Can't seem to shake at this deep grief. I feel like the ancient prophet Habakkuk, who while in the pit cried out, how long, oh Lord? And why? Why are you silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they? Or Job, who admitted, if I speak, my pain is not lessened. And if I hold back, what has left me? He has exhausted me. My spirit is broken.

It occurred to me around 4.30 this morning that perhaps the late, great Spurgeon might have understood-- excuse me, my grief better than others. When he wrote over a century ago his lectures to my students called the ministers fits, who can bear the weight of souls without sometimes sinking to the dust? To see the hopeful turn aside, the godly grow cold, professors and pastors abusing their privileges, sinners waxing more bold than sin, are not these sites enough to crush us?

The lesson of wisdom is, no matter what, be not dismayed by soul trouble. Count it no strange thing, but part of ordinary ministerial experience. Live by the day, maybe by the hour. Be not surprised when men and women fail you. It's a failing world. Be content to be nothing, but to simply love God. There are such treacherous times. If nothing else, they intensify our fear of sinning, which is healthy, as Paul warned all of us. Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

The secret of our finishing well when the journey is over is being willing to take heed of God's understanding along your way, along your journey. No longer should we be saying that perilous times will come. They have come. They've arrived. And we must face them head on, whatever is necessary to still hang on, to stand firm. We may even now live in that half generation before all hell breaks loose, and its fury is contained. We'll be remembered, if we're remembered at all. All those who use their hands and hearts and minds and bodies to plug the dikes of impending doom.

So how do you like the sermon so far? (Laughter) Somebody once commented, and I can't remember who wrote it. He said, I know that life is full of ups and downs, but I don't want any of the downs. All I want is ups and ups and ups. Well, good luck with that. Everybody hurts sometimes.

So there's a musical group called REM, which we listened to today. The lyrics of the song, "Everybody Hurts," is a video that goes along with it that's actually quite profound. And you know, "Everybody Hurts" is really understood by how many people have listened over and over again to that song. Guess how many times people have listened to this? 150 million people have listened to that song, because everybody hurts.

*When your day is long
and the night, the night is yours
alone.*

*When you're sure you've had
enough
of this life, well, hang on.*

*Don't let yourself go,
because everybody cries.
Everybody hurts
sometimes.*

*Sometimes everything is wrong,
so now it's time to sing along.*

*When your day is night alone,
hold on. Hold on.
If you think you've had too much
of this life, well, hang on,*

*Because everybody hurts.
Take comfort in your friends.
Everybody hurts.*

*Don't throw your hand
if you feel like you're all alone.
No. No. You are not alone.*

*If you're on your own in this life,
the days and nights are long,
when you think you've had too
much
of this life, well, hang on,
because everybody hurts.
Everybody cries sometimes.*

So hold on. Hold on.

Hold on, because everybody hurts.

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Well, scripture talks about this over and over again. And so I just went through scriptures, and I share these with you. In Proverbs 26 and verse 28 talking about hurts, a lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin. Ecclesiastes chapter 8 and verse 9. All this I saw as I applied my mind to everything done under the sun. There is a time when a man lords it over others to his own hurt. Or in Mark 16 and 18. They will pick up snakes with their hands, and they will drink deadly poison. Yet it will not hurt them at all. Well, that's an interesting concept. You can hear it, but I would be interested in noticing that, that someone actually do this. Someone was trying to poison someone, but God wouldn't allow that.

So in Revelation 2.11, the Spirit says to the churches, he who overcomes will not be hurt at all. Psalm 15.4, who honors those who fear the Lord, who keeps his oath even when it hurts? Proverbs 26 and 28. A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin. Ezekiel 28. No longer will the people of Israel have malicious neighbors who are painful briars and sharp thorns. Then they will know that I am the sovereign Lord.

How many people here have never had a pain in their life? Me neither. We all have pains. How many people here have just been absolutely devastated at an unexpected loss of a loved one? We all have. Pain is part of life. We don't want to talk about it. But it's part of our life. And through this pain, sometimes there is this light that begins to glow. Job, and if you know that story, there's a lot of pain. He said, my joy in unrelenting pain is that I had not denied the words of the Holy One. I'm not giving up. Job 33, a man may be chastened on a bed of pain. Hebrews 12. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Pain is for everyone. And all of us who are parents, when we see our young children in serious pain, and we do everything we can to help them, or when a baby just can't get comfortable and cries, and cries, and cries, and cries. And finally, that baby sleeps. It's incredible. It's incredible.

Pain is part of our life. And yet, there is understanding in all of this. There is the word "sorrow." Many of us have had great sorrow with loved one's passing. Psalmist says, "My eyes grow weak with sorrow." Psalm 116, "The cords of death have entangled me. The anguish of the grave came upon me. I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. Then I called on the Lord to save me." And I remember the words, "I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I am with you always." Even when I don't see him, or maybe not feel him, he will not deny us. I am with you always.

Psalm 116, "The cords of death entangled me. The anguish of the grave came upon me. I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. Then I called on the Lord to save me." Then in the book of Romans, Paul says, "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart." And that was particularly over many churches that he was wanting to give himself to.

And then in Isaiah, this interesting scripture, speaking about Jesus coming, he was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows familiar with suffering, like one from whom hide their faces. He was despised, and yet we esteemed him not. In scripture, Satan is described as a king or a prince of a nation. In Isaiah 14, it's called the King of Babylon, or the King of Tyre, or the Prince of Peace, the Prince of Greece, rather. Over the years, we've seen churches implode, divide, and be torn apart. That was never God's plan.

In Revelation 12, John writes these words, "And there was a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon," meaning Satan, "and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon," meaning Satan, "was hurled down that ancient serpent called the devil," or Satan, "who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth. And yet, after all that, John writes these words, "Now have come the salvation and the power of the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters who accuses them before God day and night has been hurled down. Because of Jesus, they overcame the accuser by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much, even to shrink from death. Therefore, rejoice, you heavens, and you who dwell in them."

In a revelation, John writes, "Praise our God, all you servants, both small and great. Rejoice and be glad." Everybody hurts from hurt and pain to these precious promises when God writes our legacy. Now the dwelling of God is with us. He's making everything new. There will be no more hurt. There will be no more pain, no more sorrow, no more anxiety. All things will be made well.

The last book in the Bible in Revelation, there is a repeat three times. And that repeat is really, really necessary. Based on difficult times that we've had in the past, here's what God says, that we can rejoice in. And here is his words to us. Revelation 19.1, hallelujah. 19.3, hallelujah. 19.6, hallelujah. At the end of scripture, these words are spoken. Even through pain, even through difficulties, even through challenges, there is a hallelujah. Everybody hurts. Everybody cries. But there is a hallelujah. And these last words, Jesus says, I am making everything new. Hallelujah.

Closing

Several of us had an opportunity on Friday night to be at Tim Turn for a dinner to raise money for a Japanese mission. And Joel was there and his family and another couple of families from Japan were there. And they showed a video of things that have happened to the church in the last five years. And it was really interesting to me because much of their outreach as a church has been to young adults. And they've baptized several of these young adults. And in the five years, some of these young adults got together and have formed families.

One of the things that stood out to me in the presentation was that when these people were talking about them becoming Christians, that they had floundered in their lives to some degree. And the term "confidence" came up in a number of their talks. They said, "I feel a sense of confidence." And I was reading this morning, and apparently in the scriptures, the command "Do not be afraid" appears 365 times. That's a "Do not be afraid for every day of the year." Do not be afraid. I think sometimes we have lots of fears. Sometimes those fears are substantial. I'm going to share with you a prayer that I discovered this morning. And I think it applies to the lesson, which is a very timely lesson for many of us. The prayer goes like this.

Our Father, we know that faith doesn't always take us out of a problem. Faith takes you through a problem. Faith does not always take away the pain. Faith gives you the ability to handle the pain. Faith doesn't always take you out of the storm. Faith calms you in the midst of the storm. We pray these things, Father, that in our lives, as we have faith, that we will be in a better position to be confidently aware that You're with us and not be afraid. Pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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