



“On Earth as in Heaven”

Sermons at Central Park United Methodist Church

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6 November 2016; based on Ephesians 1:11-23 and Luke 6:27-38

In the 1980's, The author Robert Fulghum had a monster bestselling book titled, *“All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.”*

His premise, simply put, is that successful living can be boiled down to a few basic guidelines we all learned on or about the age of five:

1. Share everything.
2. Play fair.
3. Don't hit people.
4. Put things back where you found them.
5. CLEAN UP YOUR OWN MESS.
6. Don't take things that aren't yours.
7. Say you're SORRY when you HURT somebody.
8. Wash your hands before you eat.
9. Flush.
10. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.

11. Live a balanced life - learn some and drink some and draw some and paint some and sing and dance and play and work everyday some.

12. Take a nap every afternoon.

13. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.

14. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

15. Goldfish and hamster and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup - they all die. So do we.

16. And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned - the biggest word of all - LOOK.”

If we forget the simple rules of successful living, we risk becoming morose, despondent, or unable to cope with the changeable nature of our daily lives. The world can be a harsh place. Any measures you can take to ensure a sense of personal peace and contentment are worthwhile.

Our Christian faith can guide us in a similar way, informing our path and ensuring that the choices we make are the best ones possible, according to the example set for us by Jesus himself. The author of Ephesians assures us that by following Jesus, we will gain the knowledge necessary to live an abundant, faithful life. *“I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.”* (Ephesians 1:17-19)

We who follow Jesus have been given a great gift. We have been granted wisdom, revelation, hope, and power; all for the sake of serving him. As our knowledge of Him deepens, we become more like Him, shedding our old sinful ways in favor of The WAY: the narrow gate, (Matthew 7:13), the straight path, (Proverbs 4:26) the salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16) that give glory to our God. The saints who came before us modeled this WAY: discipling us and fashioning us into Jesus-followers. *“When you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, (you) were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory.”* (Ephesians 1:13-14)

The saints applied the words of Jesus to their own life choices; then they taught us ~by word and example~ how to live accordingly. And while it is impossible to boil down all that Jesus said and taught in a few simple words, here are some basics we all could use a “refresher course” on:

1. *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.* (Luke 6:27)
2. Bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. (Luke 6:28)
3. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. (Luke 6:29)
4. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. (Luke 6:30)
5. Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:31)
6. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:36)
7. Do not judge, and you will not be judged. (Luke 6:37)

8. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. (Luke 6:37)
9. Give, and it will be given to you. (Luke 6:38)
10. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. (Matthew 22:37)
11. Love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:39)

Do these things, and you will demonstrate for the world that you love Jesus. Do these things, and you will become “a saint” for someone else, discipling and fashioning that person into becoming a strong and holy Jesus-follower. And the memory of **your life** will serve as a blessing and an inspiration long after your soul has left this earth. Again, from author Robert Fulghum: *“Every person passing through this life will unknowingly leave something and take something away. Most of this “something” cannot be seen or heard or numbered or scientifically detected or counted. It’s what we leave in the minds of other people and what they leave in ours. Memory. The census doesn’t count it. Nothing counts without it.”* (From *“All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.”*)

Memory...for all the saints, who from their labors rest.



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