

Oregon City United Methodist Church
18955 S. South End Road
Oregon City, OR 97045

Rev. Michael Benischek
503-522-9807
June 21, 2020

Series: Online Series

Sermon: I'm just a guy, what do I know?

II Timothy 1:9-12

He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

Sermon

A certain little girl in my life is learning about growing up, and flat out said, “I’m not going to have children. It’s going to hurt too bad.” I could not argue with that. I’ve been in the hospital a few times when babies have come into the world. Nothing about it was easy or fun for them. They bring us into the world at great personal cost. All I could say is “I don’t know, maybe it’s worth it.” And from the mouth of babes...“You’re a man. What do you know about it?”

And that has been my life for years now. You’re just dad. What do you know? I’m glad I have all of you to tell my stories to, their patience for dad stories is pretty low. Dad, don’t try to turn everything into a teaching moment.

On this Father’s Day, let me play with that question a little bit. What do you know. How do you know, Dad? Or the question you could ask of your pastor, How do you know, Pastor Mike. How do you know about the things you say? Fair question.

The Apostle Paul answered that this way. “Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.” (II Timothy 1:12)

The weird thing is that Paul never met Jesus face to face either. Or at least before the Resurrection. How does he know Jesus? He had that road to Damascus event, another story another time. But Paul wasn’t one of the 12 disciples. He came later. The guy who wrote 28% of the New Testament did not know what Jesus looked like. As well as the Apostle Paul felt he knew the Lord Jesus, he wanted to get to know him better and better. Even Paul had to grow in the faith. From Philippians 3: “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings....”

The point is simple: We grow in our relationship to Christ every day. Yes, there are mountaintop experiences, Baptism, conversion, confirmation, those moments we touch the divine. But each day is a day to grow closer to Christ. Being a dad, there are mountain top experiences, birthdays, first days of school, coaching little league, showing them movies that you love - hearing them repeat your jokes to the chagrin of your spouse. But each day is a day to grow closer.

That said, what are the evidences that you and I know the Lord? How do we know if we are growing in our relationship to Christ I suggest three, there’s probably more, but I don’t preach loooong sermons online.

How do you know that you know Jesus? 1) You love the Lord’s people. Jesus told the disciples, “By this shall

all men know that you are my disciples, that you love one another” (John 13:35) I have discovered in my long life of 46 years, that the closer I am to the Lord, the more I appreciate and care about people. The farther away from the Lord, the colder and distant I am from people. People bother me more when I am away from God. When we backslide, we no longer love his people. We become negative and critical and harsh and unloving toward them. There’s a dad lesson in there too, right? We hurt the ones we love? You know the person that would do anything for anybody, but their own family?

2) You adore your family. Your family can feel your love. Do you know the last prophecy of the Old Testament? It’s not hard to find; it’s the last verse of the Old Testament. Speaking of the coming of John the Baptist to prepare the hearts of God’s people for the ministry of Jesus, the Prophet Malachi writes, “He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers” (Mal. 4:6). I don’t want to get into “who is more important in the home - mom or dad” question here, because I choose life. But this is true: the home is the first place to feel the effects when a person gets right with the Lord. Did you know, some of you need to hear this: What happens in your house is more important than what happens in the White House? It’s true. We put soooo much attention in a house that’s not even ours. I like how Paul tells Timothy: Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Care for your own, isn’t that the saying? The true believer cares for his family. Does not harm them. Does not beat them. Does not make them scared. Or abuse them. A real man cares for the well being of his family. Again, not getting into gender roles or stereotypes here, but by golly if you have a kid or a family, how bout you love them? There was a guy, out of the Gospel of Mark, who wanted to follow Jesus in his itinerant ministry. But Jesus would not let him. “Go home to your family, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you” (Mark 5:19). Let your family be the judge of your character. Home is where the heart is. Someone once asked Dwight Moody, a famous preacher of another era, if a certain man were a Christian. He said, “I don’t know. I haven’t talked to his wife.” They will know that we are Christians by our love, right?

And the last one for today, What do you know? Number 3) You become a person of mercy. The more you know the Lord, the more you showcase mercy in your life. Jesus said, “Love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:35-36). You and I are most like Jesus when we show mercy and compassion to the needy and the undeserving. Jesus was “moved with compassion” for the people around him (Matthew 9:36). Mercy toward the needy is a Christlike emotion. To get involved in helping the needy and undeserving is a Christlike action.

How do you KNOW Jesus? You are merciful. There was a pastor named Rev. Bales, served a large inner city church, had this cavernous old sanctuary that was mostly empty on Sundays. Across the street was a park where the homeless gathered. So Harold encouraged the people of his church to bring them in and feed them breakfast and encourage them to stay for morning worship. That did not go over well with some of his people.

One lady said, “Pastor, why do we have to have these people in our church?”

Harold said, “Because I don’t want to see anyone go to hell.”

She said, “Well, I don’t want them to go to hell either.”

He said, “I’m not talking about them. I’m talking about you.” OUCH.

The person with no mercy toward the fallen, the needy and poor, and the undeserving probably does not know the Lord Jesus Christ at all. Mercy is one of the evidences that we know the Lord. Don’t we, as loving parents, also show mercy to our children? Time and time and time and time again? Weren’t some of us, given mercy upon mercy upon mercy from our parents? I’m just a guy, trying to do right by my family. But I do know that love for others is key. Devotion to home is another. And mercy helps us through. And so it is with God. Love for the Lord’s people, Devotion to our home, and turn your heart toward the needy around you. It’s a fatherly, and Jesus thing to do. And the people of God said, AMEN.