

07.28.21 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

Title: “My Heart – Christ’s Home: The Living Room”

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6: 5 – 13

Reflection: Rev. Evan Heerema

Reading the Matthew 6 passage, it appears that there were many opportunities for Jesus and his followers to observe people (especially religious leaders) in prayer, “Standing in synagogues and on the street corners . . . babbling like pagans . . . [using] many words.” Jesus said to his disciples, “Do not be like them.” So sad that prayer and fellowship with God had become such a poor act to follow, something not to be imitated.

In Matthew 6 three times Jesus teaches, “When you pray” (verses 5,6,7) and verse 9 is an expectation of prayer as well, “This then is how you should pray.” Prayer was meant to be a vital part of life. It was and is intended to be an intimate conversation between friends, depicting a personal conversation – even when done publicly in worship.

Time spent in the “Living Room” with Jesus is never meant to be a show, never meant to be a hurried assignment to be done before we move to something else, nor meant to be a one-sided list of personal needs and wants smothering the light coming from the fire.

Mumford describes the living room in a charming, homey way, “a quiet, comfortable room with a warm atmosphere. I like it. It had a fireplace, sofa, overstuffed chair, a bookcase and an intimate atmosphere” (p.12). Mumford liked it, so do I, how about you? It is described as a place where peace would reign, love would rule, and strength would be shared. It is a place where a relationship would be nourished.

Jesus teaches an open heart how to spend time in prayer, in the “living room”. He models an “at home” relationship with God in his own prayer times. Hebrews 5:7 provides a telling description of Jesus’ prayer times. “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.”

“Reverent submission” in prayer does not happen naturally. Such an attitude takes discipline, something we have lost in our fast-paced life. Even retired pastors seem to have a full schedule of things to do and places to be. Submitting time in our schedules to include spending time in the “living room” has become an agenda item we quickly pass by as a healthy choice. As an uncle of mine, who was a dairy farmer by trade, but who was learning to drive in town said when asked what a yellow light meant at an intersection (with a heavy Dutch accent), “Hurdy op.” God gives us yellow lights to slow down, but we just keep “hurrying op” through them. Mumford also describes what happens to disciples. “Matters of urgency demanding my attention were continually crowding out the quiet times of conversation with Jesus” (p. 14). Will any of you join me in confessing to the fact that “matters of urgency” (said with tongue in cheek) too often keep us from the ONE who deserves our presence and time in the “living room”?

A few weeks back, I read this and wrote it down knowing that it would fit this devotional. “Have you ever considered that God has fallen in love with you? He sends you flowers every spring. He sends you sunshine every morning. Whenever you want to talk, he listens to you. He can live anywhere in the universe, but he chose you, your heart” (author unknown).

It takes a very disciplined approach to develop a heart, soul, mind, and strength that will cultivate a consistent time with Jesus in the “living room.” It will take “fervent cries and tears” to turn our time, wants and lives over to time alone with Jesus, discerning and submitting to God’s will for us personally and for our church community. For Jesus’ sake, be diligent and disciplined.

Prayer:

Our father in heaven, your name alone is holy. May your kingdom come, and your will be done through us on earth as it is in heaven. Out of your mercy please give us today all that we need to let our schedule be your schedule, to your glory. And, for your Son’s sake, forgive us our trespasses, and equip us with love to forgive others, that your grace would be known, and keep us from places and times where evil and the evil one might lurk; give us spiritual eyes to recognize it and run from it, and rather run to you. We pray this because in our hearts we know that all glory, all honor, all power belongs to you, our Father in heaven. So be it now and forever. Amen.

Action Item for the Day/Week:

Make a daily schedule for today, blocking out time for sleep, eating, work, etc. AND also for time alone in the “Living Room” where you can spend time enveloped in the presence of Jesus, reflecting on who God is, what Jesus has done for you, and where the Spirit will lead you. Can you find 15 minutes in your schedule for that? If not, ... ?

Songs for today:

Song to dwell on: Take My Life and Let It Be (863 - Lift Up Your Hearts)

1 Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee. Take my moments and my days; let them flow in endless praise, let them flow in endless praise.

2 Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love. Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee, swift and beautiful for thee.

3 Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King. Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from thee, filled with messages from thee.

4 Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold. Take my intellect and use every power as thou shalt choose, every power as thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine. Take my heart—it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne, it shall be thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store. Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee, ever, only, all for thee.

Words: Frances R. Havergal, 1874, P.D.

[Take My Life and Let It Be](#)