

Thursday, September 5

Read James 2:14-26. This passage on faith and works makes that crucial connection between our faith and the practice of living out our beliefs daily. This is what is meant by the fifth assumption shared in the message and yesterday: our Christian faith, while personal, is not private. While we are to have a personal encounter with God through Jesus Christ, our faith must be lived out in the public arena in order to make any impact on

What does that phrase, “our Christian faith, while personal, is not private” mean to you? How would you describe your personal relationship with God? How would you characterize your relationship with Jesus? How might people recognize your faith in your daily actions? Write your thoughts here and pray that God will guide you in both developing your relationship with God and how that relationship impacts your relationships with others.

Friday, September 6

Read James 2:14-26. Earlier this week we commemorated Labor Day and hopefully you gave some thought on your employment and how your work impacts the lives of others – as well as yours and your family. This week’s devotions have been about how our faith impacts our daily living and therefore the lives of others and our loved ones. John Wesley’s faith impacted his actions and determined the social actions in which he was involved. Wesley sought to address the “ills” of his day – child labor laws, slavery, education, financial woes of the poor and medical issues to name a few.

What are the “social ills” of our day? Some of them may be the same as in Wesley’s time! How might you get involved in addressing these modern issues? What concerns capture your heart and imagination? Write your thoughts here and consider inquiring how our church community might address those concerns.

Message Notes – September 1, 2024

Labors of Love – Understanding Our Social Responsibility*

- I. Social responsibility isn’t about social _____ without benefit of an underlying _____ and it’s not just about _____ but certainly involves _____ processes.
 - A. Five assumptions while addressing our social _____.
 1. First is the _____ of God.
 2. _____ responsibility.
 3. Political systems and government is the way in which we live _____.
 4. Discourse about any subject, though it may reveal differences, should be encouraged for the furtherance of _____.
 5. Our Christian faith, while personal, is not _____.
 - B. Wesley took social responsibility very seriously and worked diligently to end the social _____ of his day.
 - C. I want to make our church aware of a publication that is published every four years by the United Methodist Church – The Social _____ of the United Methodist Church. The current edition was created this year after the _____ General Conference of the United Methodist Church
- II. Social Responsibility is an important part of understanding the United Methodist Church. I also believe it to be a fundamental desire of humanity to make a _____ in our world.

* Scripture: John 21 and James 2:14-26

- A. The church needs to find its voice and respond to the need of the world – yes, through our _____ and _____ – but also by a bold proclamation of how our faith _____ our society.
- B. Friends, we have to find our _____ and then seek to unite our _____ in making a difference in our world. In _____ and in _____.

Daily Meditations and Study Guide

The following is a daily meditation and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, September 2

Read James 2:14-26. Happy Labor Day! Be thankful for the blessing of work and the fruits of your labor. Pray for those who have suffered the loss of jobs and are looking for meaningful employment and the support of families. The message began with the familiar etiquette that religion and politics should not be discussed in “polite conversation.” Some people believe that politics have no place in the church.

How about you? What do you believe the connection between faith and politics should look like? Where should we have conversations about religion and politics? How comfortable are you discussing your faith or sharing your political views with others? Write your thoughts here and pray for God’s wisdom as you think about what it means to share your faith and political views.

Tuesday, September 3

Read John 21. This last chapter of John’s gospel shares the final resurrection appearance of Jesus – according to John. Jesus meets

the disciple on the seashore Jesus bids the disciples to cast their nets on the other side of their boat despite that fact that they had now caught any fish all night long. They then catch so many fish that they cannot haul in their nets! Clearly this is an affirmation of Jesus’ resurrection and the power of His power.

This miraculous event is followed by Jesus cooking breakfast for the disciples and then a poignant conversation between Jesus and Peter. Jesus asked Peter three times if Peter loved Him. Three times Peter answered Jesus “Yes” and three times Jesus instructs Peter to feed and tend his sheep and lambs. The resurrection power of Jesus’ presence is connected to instruction to care for others. What do you believe Jesus means when He says, “Tend my sheep?” Write your thoughts here and pray that God will open new ways in which we can help others in Christ’s name.

Wednesday, September 4

Read John 21. This portion of scripture, which we read yesterday, is also laden with indications of Christ’s power and presence – especially after his death and resurrection. There were five assumptions shared that support this reality and our response to it: 1) the sovereignty of God, 2) human responsibility, 3) political systems and government is the way in which we live together in an orderly society, 4) discourse about any subject, though it may reveal differences, should be encouraged for the furtherance of knowledge and 5) our Christian faith, while personal, is not private.

Spend some time thinking about whether or not you agree with those five assumptions. It’s alright to differ from these ideas. It is not alright to have no ideas at all about the nature of God, our faith and how that impacts our world. What are the foundational assumptions about your life and relationship with God and others? Write your ideas here and pray for clarity about how these assumptions impact your daily living.