

A Daily Dose of Good News

Thursday, March 19, 2020

Pastor Steve's devotional will be presented at 10:30 am online at www.engagedbygrace.org/livestream with a recording available there for the remainder of the day.

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.
(Ephesians 4:25-32)

A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood

Almost sounds as if the Apostle Paul was channeling Mr. Rogers
Before Mr. Rogers was even Mr. Rogers.

In this general letter written to the whole church across time,
The first several chapters lift up the unity we have in Christ
Who lived, died and rose again
So that all people might have life together in him
Believing Jews, Gentiles and everyone.

Now in the last half of the book he starts talking about what it looks like
When people live together for the sake of life in each other:
Put away falsehood
Speak the truth to your neighbors
Be angry but don't sin
Let no evil talk come out of your mouths
Only what is useful in building up
That's the way you please the Holy Spirit
Who has sealed you with the life of Christ in the first place.
Now let's live like it
Put away all bitterness and wrath and slander and malice.
Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another
As God in Christ has forgiven you.

So says the Apostle Paul channeling his best Mr. Rogers.
Living in the life assured by Christ Jesus,
This is how we can share the life with others ... in the neighborhood.

Even and especially perhaps as our neighborhoods contract a little bit
With the social distancing we are practicing
To do our part at slowing the spread of the coronavirus these days.

Last week, Melea and I were 6 months away from an empty nest.
By the end of this week the nest is going to be full again for who knows how long,
This time with 5 full-fledged adults sharing 1800 square feet of nest.
Be angry but do not sin.
Let no evil talk come out of your mouth
Be kind to one another, tenderhearted and forgiving

That's a helpful vision for our lives together
Especially in these trying and uncertain times.
A vision for life made possible for us by Christ in his resurrection.
Centering our lives in him so that he might live through us.
For Mr. Rogers, that means setting aside a portion of each day for
Bible reading,
Praying for people by name,
Letter writing
Simple exercise
And a ball of clay or low notes on the piano to pound
When he wants to vent frustration away from other people.

Wherever you are hunkering down during the pandemic,
I'm praying for you, that your life in Christ will be healthy and whole
With the assistance of any daily routines that help you
Center your life in him.

Be well. Be safe.

Peace,
Pastor Steve