

THE MESSAGE

Jan 3, 2010

John 1:1-18

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Our Life

365 days... okay only 363 days left. Days are like pieces of a mosaic picture and the year 2010 is ready for us to put those pieces together. Better yet 2010 is coming at us at lightening speed. It already feels like it's flying by too fast, doesn't it? Its day three already! The future is coming, are you ready?

I wonder, what will this year bring for us personally and corporately? What unfolding story awaits us in 2010? What will our mosaic picture look like? At our congregational meeting today (following our 10:30 worship) I hope you will consider answering these two questions:

1. What are your hopes/dreams for 2010 personally?
2. What are your hopes/dreams for 2010 congregationally?

Like pieces of a mosaic picture each day of our lives reveals more and more of our story. Every piece is important. Every day is important. Life is like that. Our story is important. Each one of us tells a story with our lives daily. What story are you telling? What mosaic picture are you creating?

We all have millions of pieces of life we put together to create the person we are. Some of us are pleased with our mosaic picture, and some of us aren't. Some of us are hoping to add a few pieces to make it better. Some of us wish we could remove a few pieces and forget them forever.

Question: What should our lives look like? Better yet, as Christians, what does God want our lives to look like? What does a lifestyle of faithfulness look like? Great questions to ponder here on the threshold of 2010. We are not the first to ask these kinds of questions. God's people have wrestled with them since the beginning of time.

Our answer begins with Jesus, since "he was in the beginning and through him all things came into being" including you and me. Now that we've celebrated his miraculous birth, the question is – who is Jesus, and what does he mean for us? In other words – what difference does Jesus make in your life?

I hope and pray that as we journey into 2010 you will come to see Jesus, see ourselves, and see this congregation in a new way. That you will spend time with him daily for reflection, inspiration, and transformation.

Back to the question, what does this picture of the Christian lifestyle look like? Paul gives a glimpse in his letter to the Colossians. Paul says, "set your mind on things

above, where Christ is... don't get caught up in earthly things." Read through Paul's letter to the Colossians this week. It's only 4 chapters long.

Here's the thing, we are free to use earthly things but our minds are to be focused on things above and live for Jesus. He chose you and me for a particular life. What does that life look like?

Paul says it looks like this: we put to death earthly things in us. Things like: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desires, and greed. He goes on to say that we rid ourselves of things like anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language. And we ought not lie to each other. WOW!

These are not the pieces to be included in the mosaic picture of our lives. Removed, and a new picture of life, of creation, of the people around us begins to take shape. We are called to tear out the pieces of our former life mosaic, and redesign it with the new pieces that God has given to us through Jesus. He is the word, the light, and the life for the world!

I have this habit of changing my clothes regularly depending on what I am doing. Likewise Paul says we are to change our clothes. We are to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. We are to bear with each other and forgive each other. And, above all, we are to love one another as Christ loves us. These are the pieces for our life mosaic, put together and they create a picture of God's love for the world to see at work in us. We are his living word, and light, and life for the world.

Sounds simple enough, doesn't it? It isn't.

We can't do this kind of living on our own. We don't have the power to do so. We need the faith community. We need Jesus in our lives 24/7/52/365. In other words we need Jesus in our lives the whole year through, daily.

John tells us in our reading for today that "all who believe in his name (which means "the one who saves")" as we believe in his name – "he gives the power to become children of God born of God's will." Jesus saves us from death to life because it's God's will.

Here's the thing. God put you on this earth, at this time, in this place for a reason – sending Jesus to move you from death to life. Our life comes from Jesus. Without him our mosaic picture means nothing, is nothing. With him our mosaic picture is full of life, making all things possible.

John tells us that's how God works. God takes nothing and creates something wonderful out of it. We are nothing until Jesus comes along and makes us something, making us children of God.

Amber and I expect our children to behave a certain way, living by certain values which take a lifetime to learn by the way. As children of God, God expect us to behave a certain way. And it takes a lifetime to learn with Jesus as our mentor and guide.

We are indebted to him. Jesus gave his life for us. He has set us free from sin, death, and the devil. So let me ask you, how are you/how are we going to respond to God's love at work in our lives this year? I have three suggestions:

First, see life for what it is.

God put you here for a reason for a purpose. You are alive right now because you are part of God's powerful movement to redeem the world. You are part of God's salvation mosaic story. Here's the thing, Jesus has given you a life assignment of faithfulness to him from this day forward for all eternity. "Sweeeeeet!" As my son, Simon, likes to say.

Second, clean up your act. This is something we all need to do - daily.

As Paul says put away: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desires, and greed. Get rid of things like anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language. Stop lying. Jesus has moved us from death to life. We respond by living a clean life for him. He gives us the power for living life, daily.

Third, get dressed.

We are God's people and we dress accordingly! Our clothes have a designer label on them: Jesus Christ. We clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. We bear with each other, and we forgive each other. We love one another as Christ loves us. We love God, and our neighbor, daily. We don't simply go to church. We are the church wherever we happen to be! And our clothes show it!

Imagine a world where Christians reveal God's love in word and deed everywhere they go.

Imagine a world where Christians are the kind of people that others want to be around because there is something life-giving about us.

Imagine a world where the church isn't a building for members, but a movement for God's mission to redeem the world.

Imagine the power of God's law of love ruling everything and everyone world-wide! Now that's a mosaic picture worth creating. So be it for Jesus' sake and in his name. Happy New Year! Amen!