

FPC E-news for April 2

Dear FPC family and friends,

The rhythm of holy week is borrowed from the preparations leading up to Passover. Jesus and his disciples were in that rhythm from the time that he rode triumphantly in what can only be described as the “one shining moment” for all of the disciples. All of it was in preparation for the Passover, from the reserving of the upper room, to the preparations for the meal, to the meal itself. But then things started to go off the rails a bit as Jesus takes off his clothes and puts on a towel around his waist and begins to wash the disciples’ feet.

The rhythm around Passover all of a sudden changes and there is tension in the room, I mean a lot of tension. Peter, who is Peter, objects in his own way, and then Judas and Jesus have an exchange that is quixotic at best and tensely disturbing at worst. He leaves the room in a huff and then the tension decreases dramatically. Jesus reminds his disciples of what he had been teaching them all along. Loving God is a goal we all have to have, but loving our neighbor is a new command and one that is just as important as loving God. A new rhythm is created and the disciples head out with Jesus to the Garden of Gethsemane and they all fall asleep, even after Jesus’ pleading that they would stay awake with him and pray. Was it too much wine? Maybe, but it certainly leads to Judas being able to come and betray Jesus with a kiss without any interference from anyone.

We have lost many of our religious, faith filled rhythms that were a part of our daily routine. Holy Week used to be, well, holy. Families made the time to be a part of a service where they could take part in communion, just like Jesus and his disciples did, on Maundy Thursday. It was common practice to go to Good Friday services so that once Easter came around you knew what all the hub bub was about. Jesus had died on Friday, but he is resurrected again on Sunday.

When we skip Holy Week and go right into Easter then we don’t really understand the sacrifice that was made for us by our Savior. When we go right into Easter with the celebration we do have more of a consumer mentality where we pick and choose what we want, the fun, the celebration, the fanfare, and leave out the suffering, the death, and the darkness that filled the hearts and the minds of the disciples those days when Jesus lay in the grave.

Here is my encouragement for you all this Holy Week. Make it holy. Come and be a part of our Maundy Thursday service at 7 and be reminded of what Jesus did for our sake. Come and be a part of our Good Friday service at 7 and be reminded that Jesus was dead dead, and that the disciples left the cross without hope and only with deep grief. It is good for us to know what Jesus has done for us before we get to the resurrection.

What routines and what rhythms do we have in our lives that bring us closer to Christ and closer to our neighbor? It used to be religious habits in which we took part that allowed us to understand who we were as disciples and who Jesus is as Savior. The more we follow that consumer approach of picking and choosing what we want, the less we understand the context of our salvation. We are saved by grace through faith. If we don’t understand the grace that we have received then we can’t really have the faith that we need.

I ask for a blessing upon all of you this Holy Week, I really, really, really hope to see you all this evening and tomorrow evening, and especially on Easter Sunday. Come and join us and get in the rhythm of a redeemed life.

Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Bob

#### HAPPENING IN THE LIFE OF FPC...

Coffee hour is back! Join us this Sunday for Coffee hour right after the 8:30 worship. Also, don't forget to sign up for coffee hour in the weeks coming up.

Maundy Thursday this evening at 7pm

Good Friday tomorrow evening at 7pm

Easter Egg Hunt Saturday at 10am

Easter Sunday sunrise service at 6:30am at St. Michael's

Easter Sunday here at church at 8:30 and 11