Words of Encouragement Week of July 25, 2022

July 25

Happy Monday, everyone.

This week (and maybe next week as well), I thought we would take a break from our walk through the Bible and instead take a brief detour in another direction. For this week, I would like to focus on observations from this past week when our church hosted our Vacation Bible School (VBS).

Our theme for the week was God’s “monumental love” and the story we told throughout the week was the story of Joseph, and how God watched over him.

One of the things we did during the week was ask the kids for any “God-sightings.” God-sightings are things the kids saw that reminded them of God’s presence. Answers included “the sun,” “a butterfly,” “my grandma,” and so on. All good answers that reminded the kids, and us, of God’s presence through, and in, Creation. But my favorite answer was this: “my God-sighting was me.” When Jennie asked this little boy what he meant, he answered, as only a child could, that “I’m my God-sighting because God made me.”

I couldn’t have said it better. The psalmist said it like this: “For you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well” (Psalm 139:13-14).

Last week, through all the activity of VBS, it took an eight-year-old boy to remind us all of a fundamental truth: God made us. Each and every one of us. Not because He needed to, but because He wanted to. Because He loves us.

So my prayer for you this week is to remember that you are the personal handiwork of the Most High. Created by Him, embraced by Him, and loved by Him, from, and into eternity.

IHS,
Pastor Lou
July 26

Grace and peace to you this day.

Yesterday we talked about the kids talking about “God-sightings” during our VBS week and how one of the kids said that his God-sighting was himself because God made him.

Another thing we did with the kids was introduce a daily “Bible Buddy.” A Bible Buddy is an animal that we talked about, and specifically, how God made that animal with unique features in order to survive and thrive in their environment. A video also accompanied each day’s Bible Buddy.

My personal favorite was Wednesday’s buddy, a coyote named “Howell.” (Get it? Coyote…Howell. Well, I thought it was kind of clever anyway). In any case, here’s a picture of Howell:

![Coyote](image)

We learned how God made coyotes with keen senses of smell, hearing, and eyesight in order to find food in the desert. Coyotes can also run up to 40 mph in order to catch fast prey like jack rabbits and road runners (despite what that old cartoon would have you believe). Also, the number of pups mother coyotes have in their litter is inherently adjusted according to the coyote population in their area.

Some scientists would have you believe that these characteristics are the product of “natural selection,” a random and gradual changing of adaptive traits within a species in a given location. However, science is now recognizing that this claim is a fallacy because the intricacies that are involved at a genetic level in order to produce such changes could never take place if left to random chance. And that leaves only one possibility: a loving and majestic Creator God.

So go ahead. Take a walk today if you are able, or just spend some time outdoors. Observe a bee gathering pollen on a flower, marvel at a butterfly, or look in wonder at the detail of a simple leaf from a maple tree. And then clasp your wonderfully made hands in prayer and thank God for the beauty of His Creation.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
Greetings, DGCC Family.

Two Sundays ago, we discussed how Paul, in his letter to the Romans, talks about how we are all part of the same body, which is the body of Christ. This is what he said:

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us” (Romans 12:4-6).

Nowhere is this better on display than during the week of Vacation Bible School at VBS. Whether it is Jennie up front leading the kids in song or asking for “God sightings,” volunteer leaders taking their kids to the different stations for crafts, games or stories, or people overseeing the crafts, games, or stories. People who helped decorate. People who worked behind the scenes to set up tents and to make sure the church was cleaned up for the next day. People working in the kitchen to prepare snacks every day (we won’t even talk about the jello “jigglers”…ugh.) and hot dogs for the kids, parents, and grandparents on Friday. All the people who gave donations of food and money, and all those who offered prayers throughout the week. The list goes on, but you get the idea.

So the question that comes to mind is, “Why do we do it?” Why such effort for this one week? To be sure, we had fun, but equally to be sure, by the end of the week, we were all pretty tired. It was a great time of fellowship, laughter, and getting to know some new faces. All of that is worthwhile. But here’s the thing: faith doesn’t grow and blossom unless seeds get planted. Our real job this week was to plant seeds. To tell the truth of salvation. To talk about, and affirm, God’s “monumental love” as expressed in Creation, but most beautifully in the sacrifice of His own Son on the cross, so that those who place their trust in Him can experience that “monumental love” through eternity.

And now the seeds have been planted. That’s our calling, and that’s why we do VBS. Our next task is to pray. Let’s call upon the Holy Spirit to water and nurture those seeds so that they grow and bloom into the beautiful flowers of faith. And who knows? Perhaps one day, those in whom the seeds have been planted will one day become planters themselves.

IHS,
Pastor Lou
Greetings to you in the name of Jesus the Messiah.

Another thing we did during our VBS week was to introduce a new Bible point and Bible verse every day. For Friday, the point and verse were as follows:

So let me ask you this: Has God ever surprised you? Has he surprised you with a smile from a baby being held in your hands? Or maybe with an unexpected call from a loved one. Perhaps he surprises you by sustaining you morning by morning with a beautiful sunrise or evening by evening with a beautiful sunset.

Have you ever observed His “awesome miracles?” As I get a little older, one of the awesome miracles that becomes more of a reality is the miracle of salvation. The miracle of Jesus on the cross. The miracle of the grave’s grip let loose, the darkness of the tomb vanquished by the Light of the World, and the finality of death overcome by the reality of life eternal when we place our trust in our Savior.

That love, that mercy, that grace, well, it never fails to surprise me.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
July 29

Happy Friday, everyone!
Here's your musical devotion for the week. It's our theme song from our VBS week.
Turn up the volume and enjoy!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGiAsKn3R4w

IHS,
Pastor Lou