Greetings, DGCC Family.

I’d like to start this week with something of a question. Here it is: I wonder if God reads the Wall Street Journal.

It’s a rhetorical question of course, and not one meant to question God’s omniscience (that is, His all-knowing nature). I ask because of some headlines that have appeared in the WSJ this week that have made me ponder how the heart of God must grieve at times over the skewed priorities of His created humanity. Here’s an example:

Earlier last week, the front page of the WSJ had a picture of a mother holding her listless baby in front of a tent in a refugee camp in Somalia. War, drought, and famine caused 43,000 deaths among displaced Somalians last year, and over half of those deaths were children under the age of five.

Later in the week was a feature article about a YouTube “influencer” (I still don’t know what that means) who has over two million followers. Her claim to fame (such as it is) is that she loves to cook high end Italian food. Her kitchen island is made of some sort of Italian granite and cost $170,000. Her copper pots cost over $1,000 each. I wonder if she uses pork neck bones to flavor her sauce like my Polish grandmother did. Somehow, I don’t think so.

What are we to make of this? It’s not as if we can send our Manna Ministry Team to Somalia. As I think about this, I am reminded of Jesus’ instructions to the rich young man. Here’s what He said:

“Jesus said to him, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions” (Matthew 19:21-22).

What Jesus is saying is this: “Where are your priorities?” “Are they with stuff, or are they with Me?”

So, what can we do? What can DGCC do? Let me make this suggestion: We can be an example. We might not be able to feed the poor in Somalia, but we can feed the poor down the street, in the tent under a viaduct, and huddled in a doorway at 18th and Loomis. We can resist giving our voices to “influencers” who seek to promote a life of affluence and instead give voice to our Savior and promote a life of faith, and grace, and service. Our example can let the world, or at least our little corner of it, know where our priorities lie. And in doing so, our example can soften hearts for Christ.

Tomorrow, another question: “Are you available?”

IHS, Pastor Lou
March 28

Grace and peace to you this day.

Has any one ever asked you, “Are you available?”

We often ask this question in the church. I’ve done so many times.

“Are you available on Sunday to help distribute food bags in the neighborhood?”

“Are you available to help at VBS?”

“Are you available to assist in the kitchen after a funeral?”

And so on.

“Are you available?”

As I think about it, that’s really what Jesus required of the disciples: availability. The scene unfolds very simply like this:

“As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ’Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men’” (Matthew 4:19-20).

John MacArthur, in his book Twelve Ordinary Men (thanks, Tom Reidy), says this: “You might think He would scour the whole earth to find the most gifted and talented men.” Instead, He “chose a group of men with unexceptional gifts and average abilities” (pp. 120-21). And then, He did the rest. He trained them. He taught them. He mentored them. And, more than anything, He loved them.

You know, Jesus asks each and every one of today the same question: “Are you available?” I hope you answer with an enthusiastic “Yes!” Because when you do, trust me, just like with Peter, John, James, and the other disciples, He will do the rest.

Tomorrow: Philip teaches Sunday School.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
March 29

Grace and peace to you this day.

The Old Testament. A bunch of stories that maybe are true, and maybe well, not so much. Worldwide flood? A talking snake? Evil kings, a giant killed by a boy with a rock, and some guy swallowed by a fish. Seriously?

Well, yes. Seriously. Taken in isolation, these stories can seem a bit fanciful and a bit tone deaf to the modern ear. And yet, the entire Old Testament, all 39 “books,” written by two dozen or so authors over the course of almost two thousand years have a single, powerful, all encompassing theme. The disciple Philip says it like this:

“The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, ‘We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph’” (John 1:44-45).

“The one Moses wrote about.”

“The one about whom the prophets wrote.”

In other words, what we call the Old Testament. We need to remember that in the time of Jesus, there was no New Testament. The Old Testament was Scripture, and only the Old Testament. Philip, in this one simple sentence, articulates a powerful truth: All of Scripture points in one direction: to the Messiah. Every word, every verse, every chapter, and every book lead us to the love and grace and sacrifice of Jesus the Christ.

Philip “found” Him and immediately went to tell his good friend Nathaniel.

So, how about you? Have you “found” Him? Do you live your life in a way that tells those around you of your great “find?” Do you read the Old Testament the way Philip did, with eagerness and anticipation of embracing the Messiah?

Go ahead. Set an example. Be available. Seek Him out. And then, wait and see what happens.

Tomorrow: Gifts large and small.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
March 30

Greetings, DGCC Family.

Five barley loaves and two small fish brought by a young boy and the disciple Andrew to Jesus.

A woman dying of cancer wrapping plastic ware for our meal ministry.

A simple bouquet of flowers sent to a lonely hospital room.


In his book *Twelve Ordinary Men*, John MacArthur says this: “No gift is insignificant in His hands” (p. 72).

One of my favorite scenes in Scripture that highlight this truth is this one:

“Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on” (Mark 12:41-44).

What a beautiful story. Can you picture it? Jesus Himself watching an aged, lonely, impoverished widow contributing the last of her coins, and the Master using it to teach a lesson for the ages.

As we have said before, Jesus measures the size of your gift by the intent of your heart. Large gifts given with a prideful or calloused heart are worthless in God’s Kingdom. But a few pennies given with a humble and loving heart? Well, you know the answer.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
March 31

Happy Friday and last day of March!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7Q9cCw-uCI

Here’s your musical devotion for the week. Turn u the volume and enjoy.

IHS,

Pastor Lou