

Sermon for Christ the King Sunday
Last Sunday of Pentecost
Proper 29 Year A
November 26, 2017

Sermon by Barb Marshall

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24
Psalm 95:1-7a

Ephesians 1:15-23
Matthew 25:31-46

There is a powerful reminder of the truth in today's Gospel. What we do really matters!

The sheep in the story are the ones that fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, and visited the imprisoned. The goats are those who did not do those things.

It is interesting that both sides (the sheep and the goats) were not aware of exactly when they had done the things Jesus spoke about.

Jesus explains every time we reach out to those in need, we are doing something He wants us to do. We need to see Christ in the eyes of the poor and needy. Our eternal destiny does not depend just on what we believe, but in what we do.

Actions speak louder than words. Who are we? Sheep or goats?

A story titled *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* by Dr. Robert Putnam may give us a clearer understanding of the difference between being a sheep or a goat.

Our Kids

You are scrolling through the news or thumbing through the paper and you come across a story about a kid who overdosed or was bullied to the point of such despair that the kid took his or her own life. You might shrug for a second, shake your head, sigh that this is just another case of bad parenting, another failure of bloated public schools, another example of the wide chasm between "them" and "us."

Or, you might not even notice the story at all as you move on to the business section or the sports page.

But if that kid lived in your state or city or town, you would notice. Hey, this kind of thing just doesn't happen here! You would demand accountability; you would want to know what is being done to help kids like this.

Now if the kid went to the same school as your son or daughter or grandchildren, you would immediately join other parents and grandparents asking some hard questions of school and law enforcement officials.

If the kid lived next door to you, you would be right there for that family. It would be as if your child had died.

And if it was your own son or daughter or grandchild...

The fact is: It is our own kid. Every kid is our kid, Dr. Putnam states: "Our sense of 'we' has shriveled. Now when people talk about 'our kids,' they talk about their own biological kids; they don't talk about all kids. This leads to a situation that is bad for the economy and bad for democracy. But it's just not right. We have an obligation to care for other people's kids too."

Dr. Putnam and I agree that we need to care about all kids. That's one reason I keep mentioning and raising awareness to the serious drug addiction problem we have right here in our own communities. Our family was personally affected. Thus, I became active with Families Against Narcotics and Families Anonymous-a support group for those who have had to face the epidemic personally.

At the beginning of our Stewardship program, Curt reminded us that our Presiding Bishop said, "It may be that we cannot solve everything, and we cannot do everything. But we can do something, no matter what."

The holidays are upon us. The missions committee has designated 6 Outreach Projects.

Each project will expand St. Patrick's Outreach efforts into our local communities and into the world where God's kids and ours reside.

- We are collecting toys for children ages 12 and under. Parents will be able to select a toy and a book for each child in their household. Open Hands Food Pantry/Santa Workshop will be distributing donated gifts up through Dec. 18th.
- The Oakland County Jail Holiday Outreach includes collecting stamped Christmas Cards, hygiene products, playing cards, and socks. These items need to be in by Dec. 3rd.
- Mariners Inn located in Detroit has a Holiday party program for homeless men and addicted men. They are collecting a variety of items such as hygiene products, socks, hats, and gloves.
- We provided Meijer gift cards to 5 families for Thanksgiving and will do so also for Christmas. Our Refugee family is one of the 5 families to receive gift cards.
- Homemade scarves will be donated to The Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Detroit to be given out to the homeless in January.
- The Angel Jar is back in the parish hall. We are seeking monetary donations to purchase Gifts of Life through Episcopal Relief and Development. The amount collected will determine what we purchase. For example: a flock of chickens, a goat, clean water and mosquito nets.

If you haven't already checked out The Holiday Giving Tree, I encourage you to do so today.

Even when the Holiday Season is over, our mission outreach continues. When we see despair we can help. Our pledge boxes have white envelopes for monetary donation which allows us to make our yearly commitments to 7 charitable agencies. Our Dimes for Disaster container reminds us that Episcopal Relief and Development needs faithful donation to help with worldwide disasters such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, fires, and earthquakes no matter where they occur in the world.

To be a disciple of Christ is to possess the vision of God that enables us to see the goodness and image of God in every human being. Our care for the poor, our work to alleviate despair and injustice in our community, our holding ourselves accountable for creating more opportunities for the under-educated and under-employed is our first and most meaningful response to our baptismal call to proclaim the coming of God's Kingdom through Christ.

May God remind us, his sheep that we are to help others. Remember every kid is our kid. Every person in trouble is our responsibility. Every injustice endured by another is our responsibility. Because every kid, every person in trouble, every innocent is Christ.

Amen

Resources for this Sermon:

- Connections for November 26, 2017 – story by Dr. Robert Putman, Harvard Professor of Public Policy
- Lectionary Levity by Markham and Gottlich p.94