



Pause. Listen. Act. be You.

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MONDAY 8.15.22

Actions Speak

Scripture: Mark 15:1-5

There are times when people call us to account, asking for a honest justification of our actions. We need to be completely honest to ourselves and to the other person in the conversation, but we are good at deceiving ourselves and hiding the truth. We want to paint ourselves in the best possible light and we can't always be questioning ourselves, either. Our lives and actions speak to the world.

- Have you ever had to explain your actions?
- What is our life speaking to the world?

Prayer: Help me to see my life honestly and let it speak goodness to the world. Amen.

TUESDAY 8.16.22

Putting Down

Scripture: Mark 15:16-21

It can be tempting to have fun at someone else's expense. Judging people feels really good, and it is a self-fulfilling prophecy, when you expect people to mess up you will only see them mess up. And, when we compare ourselves to those people, it makes us feel good about ourselves. In the end, though, when we judge people no one wins. It only creates animosity and dislike, furthering the divide between the two.

- Have you ever had someone treat you really nicely but in doing so they actually made fun of you?
- How do you do things in your life to push others away?

Prayer: Give me your eyes to see myself and others. Help me not to celebrate myself over others. Amen.

WEDNESDAY 8.17.22

Celebrating Life

Scripture: Mark 15:25-32

Death is not something we look forward to with hope or celebration. Instead, we seek to avoid it, sanitize it, make it go away so we do not have to death with the reality of the end. We experience a little bit of this loss all the time – the last time you rock your baby to sleep, when the kids move out, when you retire from a long-held job – and we may not feel like celebrating any of those things. But people of hope see those moment from the way they bring new life and new possibilities into our lives.

- When have you found yourself avoiding a loss? How do you feel after the loss happened?
- How can we learn to find hope and celebration in the midst of something which doesn't look hopeful?

Prayer: Help me to celebrate even the deaths in my own life. Show me the way to new life. Amen.

THURSDAY 8.18.22

False Images

Scripture: Mark 15:33-39

We want people to see us in a certain way – put together, in control, strong, head held high, without need of help from others. We may even spend a lot of time trying to make those “images” true. We work on our appearance. We buy the right clothes, eat the right food, carry the right cup and listen to the right music. We have a way of setting up our lives so the appearance others see is far away from the truth of how messy our lives really are, how out of control we really feel. But, none of those things we think are important have kingdom value or affect how God sees us.

- How can we learn to see ourselves as God sees us? How can we become ok with vulnerability?
- What if our lives, and the ordinary things we did every day, reflected more of what Jesus finds valuable and less of what the world tell us is important?

Prayer: Help me to be authentic and see others for who they are. Let my life speak. Amen.

FRIDAY 8.19.22

Unearned Kindness

Scripture: Exodus 3:4-5

American society tells us being “goal-oriented” and “self-motivated” to drive towards an often uncertain goal. We are told to put our head down and just do the next step towards the next thing, whatever that is. We often don’t even question if the goal is worth the effort, worth losing the parts of ourselves we have to squeeze off in order to reach that end. Moses finds the most success when he leaves the well-trodden path and goes towards the place God has for him.

- I wonder, if Moses lived today, would he have looked up long enough to see the side path God had for him?
- Sometimes our words and actions get ahead of our inner attitude, and we don’t really understand what we are feeling until we’ve unleashed them on someone else. When do you last experience that? How did you respond?

Prayer: Help me, Lord, to turn aside in the midst of my everyday chaos and turn instead toward you. Amen.

SATURDAY 8.20.22

Rebuilding the Foundation

Scripture: Ruth 2

As the old adage goes, “A coincidence is a miracle in which God prefers to remain anonymous.” In the second act of this play, Ruth goes out to glean barley to sustain herself and Naomi, and “as it happened, she came to the part of the field belonging to Boaz” (2:3). Boaz is a pillar of the community who just happens to be related to Naomi’s dead husband.

God does not speak from burning bushes in this book; nor does God divide the sea. Instead, God acts through circumstance, and through the faithfulness of ordinary human beings. God’s care is embodied in human action. Boaz praises Ruth for her loyalty to her mother-in-law and then enacts through his generosity the blessings of God that he calls down upon her: “May the LORD reward you for your deeds, and may you have a full reward from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge” – from Kathryn Schifferdecker’s commentary on workingpreacher.org

- People are the conduits through which God blesses us. Who has been a blessing to you lately?
- I wonder what the most authentically faith-filled response is when we are sick or in trouble?

Prayer: Holy Spirit, help us to pray when we’re in trouble, when we’re happy, when we’re sick, and when we’ve sinned. Give us courage to say “I’m sorry” when we’ve done something wrong. Thank you for listening and for making things happen through prayers. Amen.