



God and Harry Potter

3rd in the January sermon series "Knowing God"

Colossians 1:11-20 (21); John 1:29-42

Sunday, January 19th, 2020

First Federated Church of Peoria, Illinois

The Rev. Dr. Forrest Krummel, Jr.

We've been looking at the same passage in the Letter to the Colossians over the past two weeks. In the first week I said that if we want to know who God is we need to only look to Jesus and his teaching. In what is called The Great Commission Jesus charged us to "Go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe the things (he) taught us."

Last week we explored the reality that the big C and little c Church does not belong to any one person or generation. Rather it belongs to God. We are called to be stewards of God's Church, and align ourselves to the will of God to the best of our ability. This means putting aside our own desires, biases, and prejudices.

Today we will look at what it means to be "reconciled" to God.

*Text: Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds
because of your evil behavior. (v. 21)*

I finished reading my first Harry Potter book. I read it because my oldest granddaughter is "Harry Potter crazy". She likes all things Harry Potter. We took her to the Peoria Symphony when they had a Harry Potter performance. She and her older brother and younger sister are saving their money to pay their own way into the world of Harry Potter in Florida. The trip is scheduled for Spring break in March.

In the Harry Potter books there is a game called Quidditch, which is similar to polo except that it is played not on horses but flying broomsticks. The game is over when one team or another captures a small gold flying ball called the Golden Snitch. It is hard to see because it is quick and it hides. Each Quidditch team has a designated player call a "Seeker." It is their job to look for and capture the Golden Snitch. Once captured, the game ends. The team with the Golden Snitch wins. Harry Potter is the Seeker on his team.

Our text from the letter to the Colossians reminded me of Quidditch.

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

Years ago there was an evangelistic campaign that swept across the United States called “I Found It.” The “it” was God, or Jesus. I remember that Bob Gates, a long-time minister of First Presbyterian Church in Peoria, responded to the campaign with a sermon entitled, “He Found Me.” You see, it’s not God or Christ who is lost. It’s us; you and me. We are the ones who are lost.

From the very beginning, in the book of Genesis, the name which literally means “beginnings”, we read of our alienation from God. Having eaten the forbidden fruit Adam and Eve hid from God because they saw that they were naked and ashamed.

In her books *The Gifts of Imperfection*, *Daring Greatly*, *Rising Strong*, *Braving the Wilderness* and *Dare to Lead*, Brene Brown talks about Shame. “Shame is the most powerful, master emotion. It’s the fear that we’re not good enough. Because true belonging only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance.”

In the gospels we have the story of a rich man walking away from Jesus because following Jesus’ Way was too hard. He may have walked away from Jesus but he did not walk away from Christ’s love.

And then we have the “seeking” parables; the shepherd who leave 99 behind in order to look for the lone lost sheep; the woman who turns a house upside down looking for a lost coin; the father who patiently waits for his “lost” son to come to his senses, remember not just who he is but whose he is, and return home.

In Jesus we see that God is a “seeking” God. God is the “seeker” looking for the valuable “Golden Snitch,” you and me. We are golden in the eyes of God.

So how to do respond to this God? In our gospel lesson two of the disciples of John turn to Jesus and begin to follow him. When Jesus turned to them and asked, What do you seek? What are you looking for? they replied Rabbi or “Teacher”, where are you staying?” What does it mean to walk, to live with you? Come and see, he replied.

You can know about Jesus but you cannot know Jesus unless you commit yourself to walking, to living with him, to taking Jesus seriously. And you cannot know God, truly know God, unless you are willing to walk with the living resurrected Christ.

Last week we reflected upon Christ as the head of the body, his church. The work of the church is to be an inviting and welcoming community. As one writer reflected,

We don't coerce; we commend.

We don't impose; we invite.

We don't wrestle and wrangle; we welcome.

We don't threaten; we embrace.

We don't mock; we love.

We don't judge people as to their eternal destiny, not do we judge them according to their race, gender, political allegiance, orientation, tattoos, music, or team they are rooting for in the upcoming Super Bowl.

We simply need to follow the example of Jesus and invite people to "come and see". "That is all that we need to say to those who are seeking a deeper, more meaningful experience of life."

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. (v. 21)

To God be the glory.

Amen.