



Sunday Happenings

In case you missed all the good stuff...

Several years ago, I read the book “The Help” by Kathryn Stockett... and I was really touched by a scene between Aibileen who is an African American woman in Jackson Mississippi working for a white family and a little girl that she cared for named Mae Mobley. Mae was the baby girl of this family she worked for. The mother consistently abused this child both verbally and physically. Aibileen cared very deeply for the little girl and after the abusive mother would leave the room, she would scoop her up in her arms and say to her: You are smart, you are kind and you are important. Sometimes she would ask baby Mae to repeat the words after her. You are smart, you are kind and you are important. Aibileen was doing something very powerful. She was laying a better foundation for this little girl... so that when baby Mae would grow up, she would know that she was not stupid but smart, not a bad girl but a kind girl... not a hopeless case but instead she was going to make an important difference in the world.

What made it so powerful is that Aibileen was able to do that out of a place of brokenness from the abusive system of racism in our country and in that family. Her words brought peace to the little girl... and I would suggest that it was more than just peace but it was that shalom in action thing... speaking wholeness, completion, and healing into her life.

In our text this Sunday, Zechariah did something very similar. In spite of his own skepticism and brokenness, he sang a blessing and a prophetic word over his newborn son, John the Baptist. Spirit words that would lay a foundation for his life. Words of inspiration to become all that God had destined him to become; the forerunner of Jesus Christ... that voice that would call out in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord.



Sometimes I think we can underestimate the power of our words. Our ability to name the power of God working in and through one another. The power we hold to make a path straight with our words for another who is feeling lost and even lay a foundation for the future.

My mother-in-law was very good at this. She told my husband Harry every day as she rocked him to sleep that God had a special plan for him. That he was special. And he truly believed that one day he would be superman and save people. Which is not too far from the truth... I think he's pretty super and he dedicated 25 years of his life to preaching the good news of the gospel.

Of course, we know that Jesus spent a great deal of time speaking blessings over and renaming his disciples. In case you didn't know, most of Jesus' disciples were rabbis want to be's. They didn't make the cut in Torah school so they were not allowed to train with the rabbi and needed to choose a different profession like fishing or tax collecting.

But Jesus saw them. Delighted in them. Loved them. Called them. And gave them a new name. He constantly reinforced that notion by proclaiming things like: You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world, you are the city on a hill, I am the vine and you are the branches.

And get this, he told them to go out and make more disciples... lay more foundations of peace, love, grace, forgiveness, and salvation.

Friends, a foundation has been laid for you too. You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the earth.... Right now! And you too are being called to lay the foundation for others. To speak grace into their lives and remind them that God welcomes them into this wonderful family of faith and love.

In our Bible study Wednesday, someone shared that you have to first receive those words yourself. You have to believe and live into this new reality that we are indeed children of God before we can sing that song for others.

Rejoice, friends! You are loved, you are forgiven and you are a celebrated part of the family of God. Now, go lay that foundation in the lives of others who are struggling to find their way.

A few things to note:

Pastor Beth's office hours

Monday - 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Tuesday - 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Wednesday - 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Thursday - Funeral for Ann Clark

On Sunday November 28th, we began our Advent Sermon Series: Close to Home. A special devotional created by Sanctified Art is available in the Narthex for your spiritual enrichment during Advent. There are still a few copies left!

Advent calendars for children and families are also still available on the table in the narthex.

Join us this Wednesday, December 8, for our Advent Bible Study. There are opportunities for both in-person as well as virtual participation. The in-person study will meet

on Wednesday mornings at 10:30 in the church parlor. The virtual Bible study will meet Wednesday evenings at 7. The Bible studies will cover the material in the Advent devotional guide as well as the texts from the previous Sunday. I hope you can join us for this meaningful journey!

The Zoom Link for the Wednesday evening Bible Study is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5570044849?pwd=RUpaR29LVXN5VzNROElpdGFFTFcrZz09>

Don't forget to bring your angel tree gifts to church this Sunday!

In our prayers:

Pray for Ferne Rohr (The Legacy), Stanley and Brenda Shackleford, Melba Cline, Frances and Fred Wilkerson Sr., Fred Wilkerson Jr., Judy Zdinak, Vernon and Cleo Simmons, Jay and Rosalie McLear (Shenandoah), Daniel Melton, Emily Edwards' friend Dennis in Nicaragua, Linda Propst, Sue Whisman, Bob Armbruster, Wallace Clark, Cindy Spitzer, Russell and Sandy Roberts, Phyllis Lunsford, George Sullivan, Annie Collins' brother-in-law Bob Howell, Bob Weiss, Charlotte Kennedy, Dan Packer, Jr. (son of Beth Packer), Kenneth Weaver (Sally Shomo's brother), Louise Pilson, the Weiss family, the family of Ann Clark.