



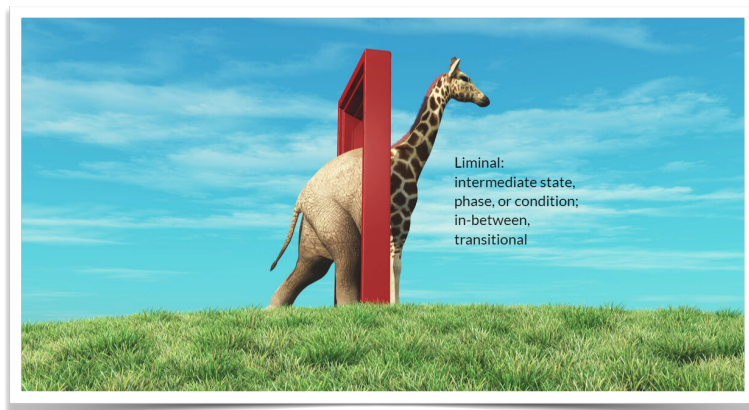
Sunday Happenings

In case you missed all the good stuff...

I spent some time sharing with you about liminal states on Sunday during my sermon. I shared a little about how helpful it was for me to learn about this in preparation for our return home from Italy after living there for 10 years.

Liminal comes from the latin word limen which means threshold. Once you have crossed the threshold, you are forever changed. There is no going back to the way things were.

I came across an illustration for my sermon. (You all know I like to preach with pictures on my iPad) So I thought I would share it with you. It's just hilarious.



I like to think of it as a line moving through space. We are all standing on the line together, but then we decide to leave the group and head to an alternate destination. Everyone else on the line keeps moving and changing as they experience life together. The people who left have an entirely different experience discovering new things about themselves. As missionaries they make new friends, learn other languages, and experience a whole new culture. When it comes time for them to reenter, and rejoin the others who were journeying with them on the line moving through space, they discover that everything has changed! Both the people that continued to journey together through space as well as the people who ventured out into something different! And that is a shock. Why? Because we are creatures of habit and we generally resist change. When we have looked forward to returning home we are shocked and saddened to find that everything has changed while we were away.



But there is a way to avoid that... and that's why the speaker helped us so much at that conference. You can prepare yourself for a new adventure. You can change your expectations and know that you can't take the same path backwards... you have to be prepared to return home by another way.

Over the years I have learned that liminal states are a common happening. Think of a college student for example. They leave home and discover new things about themselves... they foster a new independence... make new friends... implement their own schedules... then they return home... but everything has changed... stress comes when everyone tries to return to normal... but all of us who are parents of college students know that we must embrace a new normal!

This is also true when we have an authentic encounter with Jesus... everything changes... and we have to choose to embrace a new normal... exciting yes! But also challenging at times.

How ironic for me to preach that sermon online rather than in our beloved sanctuary! Change is challenging. Sudden change is rough!

But what we need to remember right now is that we are not going backwards to the way things were during the beginning of the pandemic. We are a lot wiser! We will adapt our worship when necessary just like we do for snow. But then, we will resume as soon as it is safe to do so. That means that I have no idea what we will be doing this Sunday.

The good news is change can be good. It certainly was for the wisemen. Imagine if they had not recognized that Jesus was indeed the King of kings and Lord of lords? Imagine if they had not listened to God in a dream? Like the wisemen, we can choose to return home by another way. And that can be wonderful.

There is no doubt that we are in a new normal right now. The question for us to ponder together now is what new paths is God opening up for us at Staunton Church of the Brethren? What new things are on the horizon for us? Has God been whispering in our ears and dreams something important during this time? How can we be a healthier and better version of ourselves ***because*** of the pandemic?

I leave you with my closing verse from Sunday:

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.”

- Isaiah 43:18-21

A few things to note:

Pastor Beth's Office Hours This Week:

Monday - 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Tuesday - 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Wednesday - 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Thursday - depends on the weather!

Join us for our last Advent Study this Wednesday at 7:00 PM on Zoom. I am looking forward to some great conversation with you!

We will begin a new sermon series “Big Little Letters”...sermons from the epistles. If you would like to follow along, here are the texts and titles for the next month:

January 9th - On Being Family - Philemon 1:1-21

January 16th - The proof is in the pudding - 1 Timothy 1:12-17

January 23rd - First Things First - 2 Timothy 2:1-7

January 30th - The Power of Contentment - 2 Timothy 6:6-19

In our prayers:

Pray for Stanley and Brenda Shackelford, 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, 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), Tony Reyes, Louise Pilson, Mike Sellers, the Weiss Family, Anthony Wilkerson, Jr., Philip Back, Dr. Ken Bowman (Bruce Bowman's brother)

Continue to pray for the healing and the safety of the Nigerian Brethren, the Chibok girls, and so many others who have had their lives uprooted. Keep praying.