

Walking in Greater Things

June 23, 2019: 27th CEC Found'n Day

Isaiah 65:1-9; Psalm 40:1-11; Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39

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Jesus said in the gospel, “Let us go to the other side,” to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. It was a Gentile territory, and they found a man who was possessed with demons living among the tombs, among the dead. Jesus crossed the sea going over to the other side where there was death, demons, and unclean pigs. Jesus was not afraid to get dirty or get ‘unclean’. The righteous of that day would not have anything to do with pigs because these made them unclean. They had to do this because they thought they had to be holy like God, and if God is holy, He would have nothing to do with sin. They would preach that sin separates them from God, and sin makes God get angry.

Sin doesn’t make God mad but sad. It makes Him do something, like crossing over to another side, getting Himself unclean and dirty, and delivering His beloved people and setting them free from spirits. The demon-possessed man was not acting the way he should as created in the image of God. He was violent, screaming, naked, an outcast; he was hurting himself; he was in chains, driven by a demon into a parched land. This is man as an individual and society as well. They find themselves in bondage and in chains and in a waterless place. This man is a picture of humanity as a whole. In some cases, a church. It is living less than human which is the opposite of God’s will.

Scriptures says, “For this purpose, Christ was revealed to destroy the works of the evil one.” The spirits of malice and envy, which are holding us back, are the spirits of the evil one. For God so loved the world that He did something to man who was held back by evil spirits and by the works of the devil. In the gospel, a woman, for 18 years, was tormented by Satan, and Jesus set her free. This is the work of Jesus – setting us free from the works of the evil plan, the purpose He was revealed. God’s will for us is to live life to the fullest.

When we are naked, when we are screaming, when we are violent and hurting ourselves, and when we are in chains and driven by demons to places where there is lack, poverty, and seemingly no presence of God, then, we are not moving life to its fullest. Jesus says, “The thief comes to steal, to kill and to destroy; I came that you may have life and have it abundantly.”

The Charismatic Episcopal Church (CEC) is called to participate in this work, to help make the broken whole again. Convergence, which is popular in CEC, may mean the streams of the

Charismatic, Evangelical, and Liturgical getting together. This is true, but first and foremost, we are involved in the convergence of hearts and souls, of persons and of men. Converge; reconcile; unify is our calling. We did not join a movement or a denomination, but we responded to a call. CEC is a calling, and our calling is restoration and making whole that which is broken. Convergence is not just doctrinal or about styles of worship but relational.

We are part of a Church Catholic not because our bishops can unroll a list of authentic names of bishops that trace back to the apostles – an apostolic lineage. Rather, it is because the hallmark of the Church Catholic is that we will be known by our love, by our unity, by our oneness. Jesus told the Jews, “Don’t tell Me that you are descendants of Abraham because you can trace a lineage. Children of Abraham do the works of Abraham; the members of the Church do the work of the Church, and what they do is preserving unity and restoring the Church.

In Ephesians 2:14-16, Jesus made the two into one and broke down the dividing wall. He abolished the enmity, thus establishing peace and reconciliation to God. This is our heritage from CEC, so do not ever depart from it. We have been freed from the chains of division, of animosity, so preserve the unity of the Spirit. This is seen in marriage as well – where the two becomes one.

During Pentecost, there was the ingathering; the unity. The Tower of Babel was about scattering; dividing. The definition of “devil” or diablo is one that divides - slanders, destroys, and one who breaks. Satan means accuser. He divides by destroying, slandering, and accusing. The devil entered Judas during the Last Supper, and according to Acts 1, he *turned aside from his calling* to go his own way. This is the spirit of the devil, which is to divide. The gifts and callings of God are irrevocable. Our calling is from God, and we are to render to Him what is His.

In Isaiah 65, it mentioned a rebellious people who walked in a way that is not good, following their own way. Our mission is to follow God's way. God doesn't divorce, divide, destroy, doesn't inflict pain, and doesn't cause suffering or sickness. Remove from our minds that one gets sick because he/she sinned against God. Evil doesn't come from God. 1 John 1:5 says, “God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.” James 1:17 says, “Every good thing comes from Father and He never changes.” Only good things come from God.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Injustice doesn't come from God. Evil either comes from the enemy himself or it is caused by man inflicting pain, suffering on himself or we inflict it upon one another. Be that it may, God still causes all things to work together for good. Sometimes, we don't see it saying, “I don't see the hand of God in my situation.” My question is: who saw the hand of God in the crucifixion of Jesus? Nobody, but it was the ultimate act of love and goodness of God. All that the people saw was the ugliness of the injustice, the cruelty and the heartlessness of man, and God absorbed all of these and turned them into good.

In Galatians 3, it says that the Law is a tutor and it helps us perfect the divine nature/likeness in us and god-likeness in us so that we can be like Christ who delights to do God's will. He is not forced to do God's will. Jesus is the perfect picture of what man should be – perfect God and perfect man – who delights to do God's will. *The Law is good and it trains us until we are excellently and naturally displaying what we had from the beginning, which is God's divine nature. The Law shapes our desire to make the achievement of good possible, then effortless, natural and then enjoyable.*

We were created in the image and likeness of God, but there is the growth process. When we volunteer ourselves to be trained by the Law, and we read and meditate on it, and when we have tasted and seen the goodness of God in our lives, we begin to love the training that goes by following the Law and it becomes enjoyable. It becomes voluntary; it comes in naturally, and it becomes a delight to do the will of the Lord. If we understand the good that the Law brings to our lives, nobody has to tell us what to do. The Law should be in our hearts and we delight to God's will.

In the meantime, we don't see the good that it is doing for us. This is why we need to embrace another heritage that CEC teaches us, which is faith. Faith is the substance of things we hope for, the evidence of things not yet seen. We will see! If Jesus says that we will get to the other side, we will do so even if we don't see it yet. If we see it, it is no longer hope or no longer faith. Believe; trust; lean not on our own understanding. Do not follow our own thoughts, but follow God. If Jesus said it, it will happen.

I believe God has given us a word before and He has fulfilled it many times because He is the Alpha and the Omega and He who starts a good work in us will be faithful to fulfill, to complete it, and to bring it to completion. Therefore, keep sowing; keep doing good because the seed will grow in the ever increasing kingdom of God because that is just the way it is in the kingdom of our God.