

**Here We Go!!**

**September 10, 2017**

We assume that finding someone lying injured by the side of the road is not an everyday occurrence. It is very unusual now, and we have no reason to think it was commonplace in days gone by. So when we consider the behaviour of the person we now refer to as The Good Samaritan, we need to keep in mind that this was an exceptional circumstance. It would have been charged with suspense, mystery, fear and anxiety. He just did it!

Let's look at two more characters from the Gospels.

Many of us who went to Sunday School as children know about Zacchaeus, by the song we sang about him....the wee little man who climbed the tree in hopes of getting a better look at Jesus. This was not something Zacchaeus did every day....this was a first for Zacchaeus. He had certainly heard the great stories about Jesus but this would be the first opportunity he would have to get to see Him! So Zacchaeus did

something he had never done before. He climbed a tree, that he might get a look at Jesus. He just did it!

And finally Nicodemus – a Pharisee....one of the leaders of the synagogue- he took a chance, he took a risk...he did something he had never done before....in the dark of night....for fear of his own reputation...he snuck off to find Jesus, and to spend time with him, to ask questions that were important to him, to learn from him. He just did it!

All 3 characters from the Gospels, took a chance. All 3 stepped out in faith. All 3 did something they had never done before. All 3 longed to get close to Jesus. They longed to spend time with Him. They moved closer to God. What do you think about that? Does that intrigue you? Is that something you might like to do?

This fall, I am planning to facilitate a study on the book, **“An Ordinary Day with Jesus –experiencing the reality of God in your Everyday life”**, by John Ortberg and Ruth Haley Barton. Have you ever wondered how

can we be more aware of and present with God throughout the ordinary things that fill the days of our weeks? Many of us save time with Jesus for special days and events.....a wedding, a funeral, a baptism, Sunday morning. But an Ordinary Day? Experiencing God in our Everyday life? That sounds odd.

In their book, Ortberg and Barton talk about, among other things, Spiritual Pathways. A Spiritual Pathway is described as the way in which we most naturally connect with God and grow spiritually. It is not unlike the work that has been done on Spiritual Gifts....some have the gift of hospitality, some service, others teaching. We encourage people to invest in various ministries within a congregation, based on their giftedness.

When it comes to Spiritual Pathways, a brief Yes/No test will reveal if your preferred way of growing close to God is Intellectual, Relational, Serving, or through Worship, as an Activist, by being Contemplative, or in Creation. They maintain that like Gary Chapman's work on Love

Languages which claims that we each have a primary and secondary love language, that we each have a primary and a secondary Spiritual Path - that manner or place in which we most easily connect with God. It is easiest for us to connect with God when we are on our preferred Spiritual Path, not someone else's.

So if you find out that your preferred spiritual path is through Activism, you are going to feel closest to God when you are marching in a protest movement, or making a pitch for funding to help the homeless. If your primary spiritual path is Worship, then you are going to feel close to God when you participate in worship, whether that be Sunday morning, or a special service of worship, comprised of music and prayer and a sermon. It is not going to be as easy, or as natural a path for you to feel close to God by sitting on the shore of a lake, (Creation) or reading some heady theology book, (Intellectual).

The point is, first, you need to find out what your spiritual path is. Then, you need to do something! You can't just sit there.....you can't just show up. You need to engage!

Perhaps for the Good Samaritan, his Spiritual path was service or relational. It was not his motivation, but it was a natural calling, and as a consequence, he felt close to God when he stopped to help that person in distress and when he took that beaten up person to the home of the innkeeper to recover. He saw a person in need and he responded in love and kindness. His unanticipated reward, or blessing, for the action he took, was that he ended up feeling closer to God.

Zacchaeus was Relational. He wanted to get a look at this Jesus about whom he had heard so many wonderful, miraculous things. He climbed a tree in order to do so. And then, as such an added, unexpected bonus, Jesus asked if he might spend time with Zacchaeus in his home! Nothing could have pleased the despised tax collector more. He did not

know that following his spiritual path would necessarily bring him this blessing. But he took action, and he was blessed!

Nicodemus was an intellect. He had questions. He had scripture that needed to be explained. He relied upon his courage to pursue his intellectual curiosity. He took action. And he was blessed.

In each of these three cases, these people had to do something. They needed to engage. They had to take action. They followed their spiritual path. It took them out of their comfort zone. And it took them closer to Jesus, and closer to God.

What is your spiritual pathway? If you have not taken the test, what would you guess? Once you establish what your preferred spiritual path is, you need to consider how you might move along it, follow it, engage in it. What are you going to do? It may take you out of your comfort zone. But it will help you get closer to Jesus and closer to God. You might be blessed. Do you want that?

In Canada at least, September is considered to be the beginning of the year in many respects. So much of that is climate influenced. Summer holidays are over. School starts again. And the church year starts too!

Have a look at this - these are various special events, programs and teams that are all part of the life of this congregation....ways in which we respond to the call of God, ways in which we attempt to continue the ministry of Jesus, ways in which we attempt to provide opportunity to grow in our knowledge and experience of God, ways offer to be conduits for His love into the lives of our friends, family, colleagues, and strangers.

Look at this unexhausted list - Consider what you think your spiritual pathway might be. What do you feel drawn to on this list...even if you also feel a bit of reluctance and trepidation...even if you lack the confidence to participate....what catches your eye here?

## **Christian Education**

Children's Sunday School

Youth Group

Adult Study Group

Courageous Men

Agape

**Ministry Teams**

Finance and Maintenance

Mission

Fellowship

Publicity and Promotion

Music – Choir/Praise

**Special Ministries**

Vacation Bible School

Savour the Summer

Anniversary Planning Team

Kanata Food Cupboard Service Team

In From the Cold Service Team

This list is not exhaustive. There are ministries going on here at Trinity that are not listed. There are all sorts of opportunities to initiate wonderful ministries! We are open to trying all sorts of things to express our love and care and concern for all of God's people and planet.

What we need to think about at the beginning of this new year is God's unlimited love for us, and His call upon our lives –How are we going to respond?

Here we go....the beginning of a new church year!

Are you willing to;

Take a chance

Step out in faith

Do something you have never done before

Get close to Jesus

Spend time with Him

Move closer to God

From that list, what do you think might be your primary and secondary Spiritual Pathway? My request of you this week, is that you find 3 others with whom you will intentionally and deliberately have a conversation on this topic. The first part of this is to share with one another what you think your Spiritual Pathways are. The second part is this - share ideas as to how you might move further along your spiritual path. Is there some ministry that you can engage in? Is there something you might do or say to someone that is consistent with your

spiritual path. What is it that you might do, that you have never done before, that moves you even a baby step along your Spiritual Pathway?

God will bless you on our journey!

Amen