

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

October 7, 2018

Old Testament Reading; Job 1: 1, 2: 1-10

Responsive Reading; Psalm 26

Epistle Reading; Hebrews 1: 1-4, 2: 5-12

Gospel Reading; Mark 10: 2-16

Sermon Title: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE GODLY

Summary: Only those who are Godly will be able to withstand the good and the bad around us.

The good, the bad, and the Godly.

If you read the Bible you will find plenty of examples of good things, and plenty of examples of bad things and somehow out of all of this we are supposed to emerge better people.

I love the book of Job. I know, I say that about a lot of the books of the Bible. Although I could pass on the book of Leviticus, but anywho.

Job was an actual character in history who was mentioned by name by Jesus. Job was a really good man who suffered a lot of really bad things and the book describes how he handled it and how God responded.

To the new reader of the Bible the book of Job can be a real put off both logistically and ethically. It is hard to imagine a stenographer following God around recording word for word the conversation between God and Satan. Ethically it is hard to imagine God playing “I dare you” games with the devil using an innocent man as a pawn.

This is where I believe you need to give the inspired writer a little poetic license.

I know as a child this totally turned me off and I arrogantly told God, “If you ever Job me I will drop you like a hot potato.”

This was before I learned that when things are really bad is when you need God the most.

The truth of the matter is we would not pay much attention to this book if it just said, Job was good, what happened to him was bad but it all turned out well in the end.

Job has some subtle lessons. Job proves to be a good husband by not calling his wife foolish, or a foolish woman when she says, “Curse God and die.” He says, “You SOUND like one of the foolish women.” i.e. “Hey honey, don’t say that, it sounds bad and you are better than that.” Later in the book you see how his well-meaning friends offend God by trying to put God in a box and say they know why God does what He does when it is simply not the truth.

We all need to learn a lesson from this when we start shaking an accusatory finger at some Christian that we disagree with.

If Job is the bad then our responsive reading is super good.

This lesson tells how great God is and how the author maintains a harmonious relationship with God and reaps the benefits thereof.

If I were going to write an alternate summery it might be this.
TO BE GODLY YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE LIKE GOD, BUT YOU DO HAVE TO LIKE GOD.

Job did not “curse God and die”, because Job liked God even when things were all going wrong. The Psalmist liked God and did everything he could do to please God because he was so grateful for everything God had done, and was doing for him.

Now we come to the Epistle and we see how God had made Jesus to be like man and to accept man as his brothers, “He is not ashamed to call them brethren saying, ‘I will declare your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”

It is interesting that in the call to worship taken from the Psalms, the Psalmist describes man in the same words that are used to describe Jesus in Hebrews.

In Psalm 8: 4-6, the Psalmist says before the birth of Christ, “What is man that you are mindful of him, and the Son of Man

that you visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and you crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.”

These exact words are quoted in Hebrews to describe Jesus concluding with the “I will declare Your name to my brethren “verse.

Now, don’t get too excited, I’m not saying we are like Christ, but I am saying that God created us to be better than we are. When we fell short He gave us a perfect blue print to try to emulate.

Now for the Good News of Universal Salvation:

#1 Every person who bows the knee, confesses their sins and accepts Jesus Christ inherits the Kingdom of Heaven.

#2 God overcame death.

#3 And on that day [the 2nd coming] every knee shall bow to the name of Jesus Christ, on the earth, under the earth and over the earth.

Now all we have to do is to try our best to live up to the family name to show our appreciation for God’s gift of Salvation for each and every one of us.

Hallelujah and Amen