

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

July 31, 2022

Old Testament Reading; Hosea 11: 1-11

Psalm Reading; Psalm 107: 1-9

Epistle Reading; Colossians 3: 1-11

Gospel Reading; Luke 12: 13-21

Sermon Title: What Will Be Your Legacy?

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary; Is what you are something that your descendants will be proud of?

Not rich toward God. “So, is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God?”

What is the legacy that people talk of when remembering a parent or relative of theirs?

Do you ever hear someone say, “My father was miserable and selfish but, he was rich and I want to be just like him”?

Not often, if ever. Most are saying something like how honest, upright, and loving that parent was. How that person was respected in the community and would do anything for anyone.

The legacy cherished is usually one of an admiration of someone that stood head and shoulders above the average role model. The person that made you want to say, “I just want to be half the man [or woman] that he [or she] was.”

At least this seems to be the norm of the Christian community. Unfortunately, the secular world comes off quite different. The “world” tends to come off as a whole lot more self-centered and selfish although they usually do not come right out and say it, they just let their actions do the talking.

In our Old Testament reading Hosea says that God is frustrated at seeing how the people He loved and provided for turned their backs on Him and sought after all the things that were directly opposed to His standards. They went after promiscuous, pagan religions that applauded immorality and self-serving life styles.

In this reading God seems to contemplate destroying His people but God has a problem. God loves them too much.

The Psalmist thanks God for His mercy that endures forever and recounts how God has provided for people physically as well as emotionally.

Paul tells us that Christ has brought us up a notch and that we should act accordingly. Paul says that we should put our minds on things above like Christ demonstrates and not to turn to

selfish and immoral living that is all too common all around us. If we are going to be part of the family of Jesus then we should live up to the family name and be imitators of Jesus.

This sounds all well and good but in reality, this is where it gets sticky.

We are asked to be kind to everyone and to LOVE our enemies. The trouble is, our enemies, or should I say, God's enemies tell us we are not being kind to them if we are unwilling to be just like them or at least endorse their actions and beliefs.

We get caught up in trying to be "woke". That is that we are not allowed to offend anyone no matter what they say, believe or do.

Jesus saw this coming and made some very scary and what we would call radical statements about this. In Matthew 10:34-40 Jesus says, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."

God is saying that we should not only avoid being woke but we should not even be woke when it comes to our own family. In Titus 3: 10-11 Paul says, "If people are causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with them, "For people like that have turned away from the truth, and their own sins condemn them."

Ouch! No-one ever said that this would be easy but sometimes it is not only not easy, sometimes it is downright hard.

In Luke when Jesus sent out the seventy, He told them not to waste their time on people who refused to receive them and to go out of that place and shake the dust off their sandals in contempt of that place.

I could wish that I was only speaking theoretically, but I have had to turn my back on a family member that I love dearly because he was trying to drive a wedge between God and me.

I hope you never have to go through this kind of pain but you need to know how important it is that you live out your beliefs if you want to pass on a legacy that your descendants would honor and try to follow. The problem is that your descendants will probably be much like you for better or for worse.

Therefore, try to make sure that it will be for better.

You are the richest most privileged people in the world. You have God for a Father, Jesus for a Brother and a Mansion waiting for you.

Don't be a fool with bigger barns, be a hero that can pass down the Kingdom of Heaven to your descendants.

Now that is a Legacy! Hallelujah and Amen!