

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

August 29, 2021

Old Testament Reading; Deuteronomy 4: 1-2,6-9

Responsive Reading; Psalm 15

Epistle Reading; James 1: 17-27

Gospel Reading; Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Sermon Title:

Walk the Talk and Talk the Walk

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary: It isn't either/or, it is both.

When I used to drive tractor trailer, I used to start each day with this prayer. God, please don't let me be part of an accident that hurts or kills anyone. Please help me to not be, or, look like a fool. Please don't let me hit anything or mess up the vehicle that I am driving. I promise that I will not brag about my driving. I will try to not to brag about anything but you. I will be, and I hope I am being the person you want me to be and that a lot of others will be too, so you can have a good day.

Before I preach a sermon, I ask God, May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, oh God my strength and my redeemer.

When I am about to do something, I ask God to help me do it.

When I am about to say something of consequence, I ask God to guide my words.

The irony of this statement is that everything we say or do may very well have consequences. Any who.

Today our scripture lessons address this very thing. The Old Testament reading says that we should take the teachings of the Bible seriously and not try to change them to fit our liking or comfort zone.

The Psalm encourages us to act in accordance with the teachings of the bible.

In our Epistle James says that every “good gift” comes from God and is given to us so we should take seriously those gifts and act accordingly. If we are going to be the “first fruits” we probably should be “swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath”. James goes on to say that if we pop off at people, we disagree with we are probably not doing a very good job of imitating our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. James says that we should not just be hearers of the word but doers of the word. The word says to, “care for the widows and orphans”, so that is

something we should do. The “word” also says we should uplift and encourage our fellow Christians and not be “back biters” because they do not always do their mission in the way we are most comfortable with.

In our gospel lesson Jesus takes this head on when He says, “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”

Jesus goes on to say that nothing that enters a man from outside can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile him. In other words, you cannot be a true follower of Christ if you do and say things that are not in keeping with the teachings of Jesus.

The title of this message is Walk the talk and Talk the walk.

It is commonly stated that actions speak louder than words but our old Testament lesson reminds us that we should not totally forget to speak the words. The last paragraph says, “Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And TEACH THEM TO YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUR GRANDCHILDREN.”

Teach them to your children and grandchildren, and while you are at it teach them to anyone who asks you why you say and

do the things Jesus has encouraged you to do. There is no such thing as being good for good's sake. Good is a standard that has to come from God through Jesus. Hitler thought it was "good" to establish a "master race" ISIS thinks that it is "Good" to kill people that do not believe as they do. If "good" is left up to people, then anything can be good. That is not how its is and you know it. You know Jesus. You know God. You learned about Jesus and God from your parents and preachers and friends and from the Bible.

You know that you were created in the image of God and that God has intended that you be His first fruits. God has intended that you walk the talk and talk the walk. God has made you part of His family by making you worthy by sending His Son to live with you and die for you. You are made righteous as Jesus is righteous. Because Jesus took your sins to the cross you are commissioned to be agents of Jesus Christ. You are expected to do your best to represent Jesus so others may see Jesus in the world in you. Oh, you can never be perfect but God never expected you to be. God has commissioned you to an example of what God expects of all those who were created in His image.

Jesus gave us a blueprint of how to live and now if we do our best to do it all that see us will know that it can be done.

Walk the talk and talk the walk and God will be with you even to the end of the age.

Hallelujah and Amen