

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

September 29, 2024

Old Testament Reading; Numbers 11:4-6,10-16,24-29

Responsive Reading: Psalm 19: 7-14

Epistle Reading; James 5: 13-20

Gospel Reading: Mark 9: 38-50

Sermon: **You Gots to Do What You Gots to Do**

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary: Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets, and the Lord would put His spirit on them.

I believe it was Jimmy Durante that used to say, "Ya gots ta do what ya gots to do." And I believe that is exactly what our scriptures are telling us today.

To start with if the Bible is telling what we "gots ta do" then the first thing to consider is why we should "Gots ta do" what the bible says that we, "Gots ta do"?

Personally, I think that the Psalm reading answers that pretty well. Why have we “gots ta do”? is because; “The law of the Lord is perfect, the testimony of the Lord is sure, the statutes of the Lord are right, the commandment of the Lord is pure, the fear of the Lord is clean, and the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” And, besides all that God knows that we fall short and want help. i.e. Who can understand his errors? Yo! We screw up in ways that we are not even aware of, so the psalmist says, Cleanse me from secret faults. Lord, if you don’t let these screw ups have dominion over me, then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. Only then can the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord my strength and redeemer.

Hey, I resemble that remark. That is what I ask of God before each sermon.

OK if this is the reason for the assignment what is the assignment?

In our Epistle, James is really good at telling people what they should do to supplement the grace of God (much to the chagrin of many theologians). But that is the subject of a bible study, not a sermon. Suffice it to say that this is a pretty good blueprint for the believer. Paraphrased, “If anyone is suffering, pray for them. If they are cheerful, rejoice with them. If anyone is sick, call in reinforcements from the church elders armed

with anointing oil and use it in the name of Jesus Christ.” Side note here. “A prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.” Also, “If you screw up, come clean and pray for each other (this goes a long way with God). And finally, “you would not let a drowning man drown why would you not try to rescue a man drowning in sin? That will really get points with the Father”.

Next, in our Gospel lesson, Jesus says that if what we got to do is to evangelize then we should not look a gift horse in the mouth.

“Now John answered Him, saying, ‘Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.’ But Jesus said, ‘Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.” Now paraphrased, Jesus goes on to say even a little thing done in My name will score points, but on the other hand if anyone tries to mess up a new believer’s faith they will be up that proverbial creek without that necessary means of propulsion.

Hey, Jesus spoke in the vernacular of His time, why shouldn’t I? Never mind, there are way too many reasons. Anywho!

Jesus then goes on to impress upon the listener how important it is to honestly attempt to follow the precepts of God. Jesus is

not really suggesting self-mutilation but rather pointing out how important it is to act and speak with credibility and reverence. No Jesus is not suggesting that you cut off a part of your body but rather how much more devastating to you and your soul it is to be spiritually handicapped then it would be to be physically handicapped.

“For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt (spice) in yourselves and have peace with one another.”

Jesus wanted people who would profess His name to do it even if they did not have any special credentials. A guy on a street corner with a sign that says “Jesus is the answer” is just as important to God as James Gardner or Billy Graham.

Ya gots ta do what ya gots to do is not a mantra for preachers only it is the assignment for every believer in the world.

This mantra was not originated in Christ. This has been going on since the creation of man.

This was the sum and total of the whole lengthy lesson from Numbers. Moses said to his people and to every one of us, “Oh, that all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!”

Will you bloom where you are planted? Will you allow the Holy Spirit to dwell in you so that you can prophesy (in your own little way) the reality and glory of God the Father and Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit (inside you) to your little world around you? I Hope So!

Hallelujah and Amen