

Another Word August 1, 2023

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

We have been blessed with beautiful Sundays to be out at the pavilion to worship. And blessed to have visitors come to worship and leave as friends.

For those who weren't here last Sunday, we voted unanimously to partner with LifeWise Academy and host Ashland Middle School students in our building. We are called to spread the Gospel to the world. What a wonderful step we are taking. And think of the lives that will be touched and changed!

Our scriptures for the next two weeks are:

Aug.6: Isaiah 55: 1-5. Alan Girard is our serving Elder. Our New Testament is Matthew 14:13-21. The feeding of the 5,000.

Aug.13. Psalm 85: 8-13. Matt Henderson is our serving Elder. Our New Testament reading is Matt. 14: 22-33. Is it time to get out of the Boat?

Please continue to pray for Ken Bee and Nancy Carlyle Harper, Gary Mowry, and Janice Strine. Janice has bruised ribs, Ken is home and doing well after heart surgery, Gary's knee surgery went well, and Nancy, after a whole battery of tests was sent home after not finding any serious problems. The power of prayer is all around us. Let us go to our great Physician in prayer.

Our Most Holy God, to you alone do we raise our voices in praise and adoration. Your love is abounding and unending. There are so many who are lost in the darkness and are struggling to find their way home. May we, your servants reach out to them through Your light of truth, Your love, and Your compassion. You hear our cries when troubles befall us, and You always respond to our needs. Search our hearts O

God. Test us, cleanse us, and direct us in your way of everlasting peace. In the Good Shepherds' name, we pray, Amen.

There is a certain person in town who worked with my father. Whenever we meet, one of the things he always tells me about is the fiery temper my father had. Honestly, I saw it first-hand as I grew up, so I never need a reminder. Besides, I too have some of that fiery temper in me. I try to never show it but trust me, it's there.

A number of years ago Donita's cell phone went missing. Afraid that it was stolen, I called our service carrier and asked them to cancel the lost phone. The person said they would be happy to cancel the old phone and send us a replacement, to which I agreed.

Our next bill arrived with quite a price jump. It included the price for the new phone as well as the cancelling of our old contract and being signed up to a much more expensive new contract that also extended our service for 3 years. Needless to say, I was a little "concerned."

I called to clarify that all we needed was the phone, not all the changes. I was informed that when you changed phones a whole new contract was put in force, replacing the "obsolete" plan we had.

I calmly stated that I would not have agreed to any of the changes if I had been informed. I was then told that the original contract we had included these changes, and that I had indeed acknowledged and agreed to all of them. Wrong answer! From that point on, my anger and voice began to build. No matter what I said, it fell on deaf ears. I can still remember the moment when I heard myself almost shrieking into the phone. It wasn't me screaming ...was it? ...Was I that out of control?

I was so embarrassed. The person on the other end of the phone did not deserve the angry tirade that erupted in my quest for “justice!” How had my anger affected this person? And how in the world had I allowed myself to disconnect my faith with being a light to others? I apologized to her and quietly hung up the phone.

In the Book of James, he writes, “Brothers and sisters, everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to be angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.” James 1: 19-20. Can I say, “boy was he right!”

Let’s face it, none of us are perfect, but there is never a time when out of control anger is appropriate. When I thought back over this incident, I realized I didn’t listen closely enough to what was being said. And I discovered that the original contract we had spelled out all the changes. (Egg on my face!) I opened my mouth way before I had all the facts, and then let my anger control me. I was crushed with shame!

We are all called to live in humble dependence on God and to be devoted to serving others; not erupting in anger. I have learned my lesson. To Listen, to wait before responding, and to keep calm in all situations. If you don’t, you may jump to conclusions and end up being wrong.

By the way, what happened to the lost phone? A couple of days later as I was snow-blowing our driveway, a red flip phone was tossed up out of a snowbank. Talk about poetic justice!

In His Peace,

*Rich*