How Beautiful the Faith We Share
Luke 7:18-23
Third in a series on stewardship
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October 14, 2007
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Marquette, MI

Several years ago there were a series of Little Caesars commercials under the heading of "seeing is believing." One of the favorite ones my high school buddy and I liked to reenact was a man asking if you could get 2 pizza's for one low price at a rival company. The worker put a pair of glasses on the customer with the picture of a second pizza placed in the frames and said "What do you see there?" The customer responded "I see two pizza's!" "Well then" the worker said "yes we have two pizza's!"
The customer said "I see thank you!" The tag line of course was seeing is believing.

Now of course it is obvious in this situation that it is not true. Seeing is not believing here, but the reasons are apparent to everyone. It mirrors our society in many ways today. Seeing is not always believing! We look skepticism sometimes on a great many things like those seen on TV commercials, other offers

made to us and we always ask what is the cactch. The problem is of course like in the Little Caesars commercial is we may have been or know other who have been duped.

In Jesus time we John the baptizer being very cautious here as well. He sends the messengers to ask the question if he was the one or if they were to wait for another. Many times we might ask ourselves the same question. Is Jesus the one or are we to wait for another?

Jesus doesn't tell them that yes I am the one here as he does in John's Gospel. He doesn't even say well of course. He simply tells them to report on what they saw, the evidence should speak for itself.

Even today we can let the evidence speak for itself. Where is the evidence you might say. Well it is the faith we share together, and in the faith we share with the world that transforms lives! It transforms them hopeless survival of the days ahead to a hope filled future that each day will be better than the next because of God's faithfulness and what God has done for us already.

It is this faith that we share that keeps us in commonplace with the gospel of Christ. It reminds us that God's creation is beautiful and as people called into the body of Christ we are called to share in that promise, and by sharing what we see we can tell and show others of the good news in Christ Jesus.

Today we will receive our stewardship packets and it gives us an opportunity to for us to give thanks for all that God has done and to do our part to share in what we have seen happening in Christ's church at FUMC.

Whenever we take the vows of membership, every time we baptize someone as we will do today, we make a promise to them and to ourselves again that we will support and share together in our faith journey through our prayers, our presence, our gifts, and our service.

Prayers

Joke about tavern owner and Methodists. Now I am not saying that always our prayers should or could be used in such a way. The overall point is do we believe in prayer and what it can do in

our lives and the beauty of praying together that can shape the lives of others, and make the presence of God known in our lives.

Presence

Not just our presence together here on Sunday morning, but our presence in the world that tells of the beauty of God's world and the beauty that lies in a relationship with one another through Christ. How do we share that presence in the world and how do we invite others into our common presence that shows we believe we are a vital part of the body of Christ at FUMC.

Gifts

Now of course part of our gifts is the amount that we return to God for the support of the ministries of the church. When we give we are blessed far more than we could ever imagine, because God first gave to us. That is why we ask to make a pladege and to work our way towards tithing. Ten dollars a week is a good place to start, but pray about what God is calling you to contribute for the up building of the church. It is more than just money also. What gifts do we share in faith that contribute to the well being.

Perhaps it is the gift of teaching, or healing, the gift of listening, or understanding. There are those skilled with their hands, and those skilled with the mind all of which God has blessed us with. Pray about how God can use those gifts for the work of FUMC.

Service

All of these are put into action when we are called into service. Notice Jesus doesn't spend his time telling John's disciples about how he does these things, he just does them. Jesus ministry is full of him going out of his way to serve those in a need and by his service others can respond in no other way to follow him. How are we being called to serve in our ministries here? What new ministries is God putting before us that will compel people to respond in no other way but to follow? Pray about where God is calling you, but then put that into action. Our ministry fair today gives us a glimpse of where we can serve and reminds us of what we are already doing.

The beautiful part of the faith we share is that we do not do this alone, we do it together, as the body of Christ.