

Sunday, September 6, 2020 - 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Ezekiel 33:7-11 (NRSV)

⁷I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel.

⁸If you do not warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand.

Cf. James 3: 1 – Not many of you should become teachers, for we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

¹¹As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live.

Cf. 1 Timothy 2: 3-4 – God our Savior desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Psalms 119:33-40 (NRSV)

Psalms 119 – 176 verses – eight verses beginning with each of the twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet – in order – all saying essentially the same thing – “Lord, I love your Law; obeying your Word brings life.”

Someone must have really liked repetition and structure

Cf. “Monk” – “See, I really am not so bad.”

Your statutes (33) – law (34) - commandments (35) - decrees (36) – ways (37) – promise (38) - ordinances (39) – precepts (40)

Romans 13:8-14 (NRSV)

Further expansion on Romans 12: 2 – Do not be conformed, but be transformed, by a complete renewing of your mind.

⁹The commandments are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (*Matthew 22: 39*)

¹¹It is now the moment to wake from sleep, for salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers.

What do you feel urgent about?

Are you urgent about the things that are the most important?

Are you urgent about the things that God would want you to be urgent about?

¹²Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

¹⁴ Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh.

Matthew 18:15-20 (NRSV) – Seven Steps for Resolving Conflict

Step One – Acknowledge the conflict – “If another member of the church sins against you.”

Conflict is inevitable. How did your family of biological origin handle conflict?

Step Two – Own responsibility – “You” – Jesus places the burden for taking the first step upon the person who is listening to Him, no matter who is at fault.

Is it palm-licking time for you right now?

Step Three – Approach rather than avoid – “Go.”

Step Four – No third parties – “When the two of you are alone.”

The problem is that we do not want to go to the person who is involved. We would rather go to someone else.

Step Five – Use sensitivity vs. ventilation, which only reinforces anger. The problem with ventilation is that it can feel good and it can be self-reinforcing.

Step Six – Use direct communication – “Point out the fault.”

Many people address issues and relational problems only indirectly. Name the last ten percent.

Step Seven – Aim at reconciliation – “If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.”

The goal is always – wherever possible – to restore the relationship.

With this seventh step we move beyond normal, natural human ability to something that requires a miracle of God’s grace.

Forgiveness vs. reconciliation.

What forgiveness is not – what forgiveness is.

The most detailed instructions that have been recorded from Jesus are for a situation where there is a broken relationship within the church.

The healing of relationships is even more crucial when people do not have many (if any) other options.

²⁰ Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

This promise of Jesus was given for a setting when two or more people are working to restore a broken relationship within the church.