

06/04/17 - BUCYRUS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

“STAY ON THE PATH”

Pastor Mike Corwin

Text: Galatians 6:1-10 God’s Word: Psalm 139:13-16

I - YELLOW BRICK ROAD:

Today there is a lot going on in our church. We celebrated Holy Communion, we recognized the High School Graduates, and we will be doing baptisms and receiving our confirmands into membership. And all of this takes place on the day we recognize as Pentecost Sunday - the day God's Holy Spirit invaded the upper room, set the disciples on fire, and caused the birth of the church of Jesus Christ. WOW!

Today we also conclude our series of messages on the Wizard of Oz. We've talked all about the main characters. About Witches, flying monkeys, a lost girl and her dog. We've talked about wizards, scarecrows, tin men, lions, and munchkins.

Today I want to finish by talking about the road. About the path made of yellow bricks that brought them all together and led the way throughout the movie.

II - OUR ROAD:

I want to point out that each of you has a road to follow too. It may not be a yellow brick road, but it is a road that will get you to where you need to go. A road, that if you follow it, will get you to a happy ending, as the yellow brick road did for all those who followed it.

The road you are supposed to follow was paved long before you were even born. The passage you heard read from the Psalms this morning is all about that road. The passage and the accompanying verses you'll find around these, tells you how much God loves you and is connected to you. He was there as you were being conceived and there as you grew in your mother's womb. When even ultrasound couldn't see what was going on, God was watching.

Then we see the road...the path. We have to get a little theological this morning to understand verse 16, which says:

¹⁶You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

This passage does not mean that you are a preprogrammed robot and you have no choice in life or that God wrote the script and you must follow it. That's not what it is saying. What this verse means is that God lives in the past, present, and the future. He not only watched you being formed in the womb, but that he watched you live out your entire life even before you were born.

It means that God laid out a path for you to follow and he already knows when you made good choices and stayed on the path and when you made poor choices and strayed off of the path. He knows how you exercised the free will he blessed you with as one of his children.

III - PENTECOST:

The story of Pentecost is a wonderful example of this theology and choices that have effected it. God had a path laid out for his children from the very beginning of his time with us. He made a wonderful world, perfect in every way, and then created children that he could pour out his love on. He laid a path before them to love him back and be perfect for all of eternity.

But we didn't follow that path. We sinned and rebelled against him. But being the God he is, he knew that was going to happen and had a plan with a new path laid out to correct our iniquities. He sent his Son Jesus to live among us, teach us about the Kingdom of God, die for our forgiveness and be resurrected to show us eternal life.

After his resurrection he ascended into heaven and God sent his Holy Spirit to all who had faith in his Son. That Spirit enabled Peter and the others to start The Church...to start "The Catholic Church" which as the confirmands all learned does not mean the Roman Catholic denomination, but means the church universal. And by the choices of mankind, we have come up with all kinds of rules and regulations on how that church should be run, we have broken into different denominations because we argue over such things as how to worship, how to baptize, and how to serve communion just to name a few. Man-made religion has messed up Jesus-led Christianity. But the road's still there...still open for those who will follow it.

IV - TEXT:

The road that God laid out for each and every one of us is still open too. All we have to do is stay on the path. We do that by following the teachings he has given us in this book (The Bible).

As we send our High School Graduates out into the world, as we baptize people into our faith family, as we confirm those who have studied their faith for the last 13 weeks, and as I remind everyone else about what it means to follow the path, I want to share this lesson from Paul with us all this morning.

GALATIANS 6:1-10 (NLT)

¹Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. ²Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. ³If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. ⁴Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. ⁵For we are each responsible for our own conduct. ⁶Those who are taught the word of God should provide for their teachers, sharing all good things with them. ⁷Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. ⁸Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. ⁹So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. ¹⁰Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

There are so many instructions about how to stay on the path in this passage. It tells us to:

- Help one another stay on the path - help those who have strayed to get back on it.
- Drag them back - don't let them tempt you to get drug off.
- Be humble and help one another - show compassion to one another.
- Worry about what you're called to do and do it for God instead of for recognition of others.
- Look for those who can help you discern and follow the path and take care of them so they can do that.

- You'll reap the benefits of your actions. Live for God - not for yourself. Get on the path and bring others on it with you. Then you'll live forever instead of facing death.
- Have the stamina to stay on the path and do God's bidding - it will pay off in the end.
- Spread the light...not the darkness, especially to those in the family of faith.

V - STAY ON THE PATH:

Today's message is simply...**STAY ON THE PATH!** Not the one you made...the one God laid out for you. Don't stray from it, stay on it.

We celebrate the beginning of the church this day. Stay in it to learn how to follow the path.

We baptized babies and teens today. That means we are supposed to see you regularly so we can direct you on the path. It doesn't mean we just see you on holidays.

We celebrated your graduation today. The knowledge you obtained the last 12 years means nothing if you don't also have the knowledge of God to know how to use it.

And we took in 13 new members who completed confirmation. That isn't the end of your journey - just a piece of it. It gave you the basics of your faith but there's so much more to learn. There's so much more you need to learn to walk the path and stay on the path.

If you stay connected to the church started over 2,000 years ago, you will find and walk the path...not a yellow brick road in a make-believe land, but a road paved in the blood of your Lord and Savior. A road that will lead you to Salvation and eternal life. It's been my pleasure to provide you with the map.

AMEN