

11/27/17 BUCYRUS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

“BE A FROG” Pastor Mike Corwin

Text: Luke 12:1-7 God’s Word: Psalm 46

I – JULIE’S STORY:

I want to tell you a story this morning. It’s a true story about a woman I know personally. The story has a happy beginning like a once upon a time story. This girl grew up in the area and was raised in a good home and surrounded by people who provided for her and loved her. She never wanted for much, was a good student who finished high school and went on to get her nursing degree and became an ICU and emergency room nurse. She married her high school sweetheart and I don’t believe she dated anyone but him. They bought a house together and had two children. Life just couldn’t get much better than this. But then the story takes a tragic turn...

In 1986, at the age of 33, things started to happen that she just couldn’t understand. She started seeing spiders and ants crawling across the pages of books she was reading and across the television screen as she watched. She started having strange dreams and would wake up screaming as she hallucinated and saw giant ants standing at the foot of the bed, and once saw Jesus standing there with horns. She became unable to cope with the simplest issues or questions concerning her children. She was never a danger to others, but was to herself as she had voices in her head telling her to drive into a tree at a high rate of speed among other things. Her psychiatrist labeled her “suicidal with intent” which mean if given the chance she would take her own life. This deeply faithful woman quit going to church because her mind made her question her faith. When she prayed evil thoughts came into her head. If she even to this day hears the word “Satan” it sends her into an episode that can last for days.

When her husband was called home by her children to find her laying in the fetal position on the dining room floor, sobbing uncontrollably she was committed to the Marion General Hospital in the Psychiatric ward where she stayed for 45 days until she was properly medicated and could function.

II – BE A FROG:

In the blink of an eye this happy, productive, loving, Christian woman changed. She went to bed one night a whole person and woke up the next morning as a paranoid schizophrenic who will always need medication and help, and it was of no fault of her own. It just happened.

What do you say to someone like this? What words of hope and encouragement can you offer? What do you say to her husband who could fix everything...but couldn’t fix this...who no longer had the woman he had married in once upon a time land? What do you say to the children whose

mother was no longer able to help them with the simplest things? What do you say to the friends and family who want to do something but can't?

You tell them to "BE A FROG." That sounds funny and useless, but not after you realize that FROG stands for FULLY RELY ON GOD. In a case like this you have only one real choice, only one viable option and that is to Fully Rely On God. No matter how powerful we are, no matter how skilled or important we think we are, the truth is there are things in this life, in this world, that we have absolutely no control over. There is nothing we can do to change it ourselves and all we can do is trust that God knows what's going on and will ultimately take care of it. There comes a time when we have to look at ourselves and realize we're not God. He's all knowing and powerful – not us. He has gifted doctors in helping diagnose and help people, and others in providing care, but the bottom line is, they're not God. There is only one God position in the universe and the position is already filled.

III – TEXT:

In the last 2/3rds of chapter 11 Luke records the confrontation Jesus has with the Pharisees. They were verbally attacking Jesus and his answers made them furious. He is fully aware of what's coming at the end of his ministry and he knows that the disciples will face trials and tribulations. In Chapter 12 we find Jesus giving them instructions for the coming crisis. We look at this today and find that these words comfort us and show us where to put our Faith in our own times of crisis.

Luke 12:1-7 (NLT)

12 Meanwhile, the crowds grew until thousands were milling about and stepping on each other. Jesus turned first to his disciples and warned them, "Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees—their hypocrisy. ² The time is coming when everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. ³ Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops for all to hear! ⁴ "Dear friends, don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot do any more to you after that. ⁵ But I'll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill you and then throw you into hell. Yes, he's the one to fear. ⁶ "What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. ⁷ And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

We have the image of vast numbers of people crowding in and around Jesus to the point they are crushing one another. We find that before Jesus addresses the crowd who has come to see and hear him, he teaches his disciples...those who have come to know him and believe in him. It's they who will be receptive to his words. He tells them to beware of the Pharisees' yeast. Yeast was a Jewish symbol for the permeating power of sin. If you put yeast in a loaf of bread it affects the whole loaf, just like sin affects the whole body. The Pharisees represent the human religious

powers of the time and Jesus is telling them that their hope and Salvation will not come from the human religious people.

This passage can be a little scary if you don't take it in context of the rest of the passage, and indeed it should be scary if you're doing the things you shouldn't be doing. What it means is that God sees all, hears all, and knows all. No matter what you're doing, what you're going through, God is aware of it. He sees and cares for us at our best and at our worst. Proverbs 15:3 says, "The Lord is watching everywhere, keeping his eye on both the evil and the good."

Jesus then gets down to the nitty-gritty. He says they are his friends...they know him and they know God. He tells them not to be afraid of people and things in this world who can harm them or even kill them. That's the worst they can do...end your life here on earth. If you want to worry about anything worry about your relationship with God. It's God who has the power to affect your life not just here but for all of eternity. It's God alone who controls your final destiny. Jesus doesn't promise us we'll get through this life unscathed and without troubles. What he says is if we stay focused, if we FULLY RELY ON GOD, then it doesn't matter what happens to us here and now because our future is assured.

Then we find one of the most reassuring verses in the Bible. The verse that tells me we can have faith that God is watching over us no matter what we're going through and we can trust in him in all ways at all times, that he has our best interest in his heart.

He compares our lives to the cheapest thing you could buy in the marketplace...a sparrow. It was a tiny insignificant little bird and yet Jesus says God is watching over this little creature. And if he cares for this bird, how much more does he care about his children. He cares more for us than a whole flock of these birds and knows the little intimate details of our lives. We have no need to be afraid of anything, to worry about anything, because God knows what's going on in our lives and loves us!

IV – PSALM 46:

This message of fully relying on God is what King David was writing about in Psalm 46. He says in Vs. 1 that God is our refuge and strength. He says in the next few verses that it doesn't matter that the earth quakes and shakes, that mountains tremble and crumble, doesn't matter that oceans roar, or that nations go to war because, as it says in vs. 7, God is here among us. God is our fortress. In the middle of chaos we can find peace when we Fully Rely on God.

You see...bad things do happen to good people. There are things in this life that make no sense...that have no reason...that we can't fix or correct. All we can do is release it and rely on God to oversee it and hold it in his care and love.

- When a 33 year old develops mental illness we have to be a FROG
- When a loved one develops Alzheimer's we have to be a FROG

- When you or that loved one gets the cancer diagnosis you have to be a FROG
- When a loved one or a friend OD's you have to be a FROG
- When suicide affects you and those around you you have to be a FROG
- When the kids leave the house on a date and you worry about their safety you have to be a FROG
- When family or friends are in harm's way protecting us overseas all you can do is be a FROG
- When a loved one dies and it tears our hearts open all we can do is be a FROG

In the things we have no control over, the things and situations we can't fix or remedy, we have to realize we don't have a red S on our chest. We are not superman or superwoman and the only choice we have is to relinquish it to God and Fully Rely on his love and his grace.

V – I KNOW IT WORKS:

I know it works. I know that fully relying on God through his Son Jesus works. I know for a fact that it can bring peace of mind through the utter chaos. I know because that woman I told you about at the beginning of this message is the woman I've been married to for the past 43 years...the mother of our children.

Julie's favorite verse of the Bible is found in Psalm 46. It's in the first part of verse 10, which states:

“BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.”

She will tell you that when she was in the deepest darkness of her disease she remembered this verse, she turned the whole thing over to God, and she felt his presence with her at that very moment as she turned it over. It's that verse that brings her, and me, peace. It's the verse that says when we can't fix it...when our human resources can't take care of it, when we get tired of living in the chaos, all we have to do is stop, claim our relationship to Jesus the Christ, and turn it all over to God. Let God be God. We receive the needed peace when we FULLY RELY ON GOD.

If you want to get out of the chaos of life all you have to do is find Jesus and then BE A FROG.

AMEN