



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast *June 14, 2020*

Note on the Readings: while the lessons for this Sunday differ dramatically from one another, as you read through them listen for these two themes: (1) God is powerful in all things and (2) note that God does not usually choose the most worthy people!

Readings for the 2nd Sunday After Pentecost

Genesis 18:1-15, (21:1-7): Three strangers visit Abraham and Sarah.

Psalms 116:1, 10-17: "How shall I repay the Lord...?"

Romans 5:1-8: "...we boast also in our sufferings..."

Matthew 9:35-10:8(9-23): Jesus heals in the villages and sends out the disciples, to the Jews first. Jesus warns them of the hardships facing people following The Way.

Not a sermon...

During my past experiences as a substitute minister in a church for the first time, I would always open the sermon like this: "I asked what the length of a good sermon is for you. Do you measure it in seconds, minutes, or hours? [...pause...] Did you bring a lunch?" Invariably there were more than a few laughs, many of them nervous.

That's the idea behind the "Sunday Blast": not to give a sermon but to toss out themes a full sermon might cover, like the "Note on the Readings" at the top of this page. While there is much scripture to discuss this Sunday, I'm going to turn to Romans 5:1-8 (since this is "not a sermon"). Here's a portion:

"[2] we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. [3] And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

A striking feature in Romans 5 is the way in which Paul repeatedly refers to hope: "We boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God" (v. 2); "character produces hope," (v. 4); "and hope does not disappoint us" (v. 5). Here hope has nothing to do with the superficial expressions of hope in contemporary conversation (really "wishes"), as in hoping for good weather or hoping for a victory in Saturday's game. Instead, in v2, hope is the Christian conviction that we have a future life with God. This hope may be motivated by suffering and endurance and character, and we hope the future will not prove to be a disappointment. Hope may be strengthened by these human experiences and may be a result of religious pride ("boasting"), but Paul reminds us hope is a gift from God, as the end of v. 5 makes clear.

May it be so. AMEN!

-Blessings, Vance

Prayers for the Raquette Lake Community working under unusual circumstances to prepare for the summer season, especially Jim, and those who worry about their economic futures. Prayers for Fr. Rick's recovery. Prayers for good test outcomes for Franny.
