



May 25, 2014

Thought For The Week

Scriptures: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17,
1 Peter 3:15-18, John 14:15-21

I have attended many basketball games in my life and I must say that the sound of the cheerleaders, the band, plus David Essex blaring out the "Hey Song", and now even the strobe lights are a little much at this age of my life. But as I sit here at the computer in the quiet of my room, I am thinking, what would a basketball game be without joyful noise?

If the stadium were completely quiet, would the two teams even have any incentive to play? If attendees would be constrained to sit and not cheer would they even want to pay the price a ticket? If you want your favorite team to win, you need to support it with your voice, your spirit, and your enthusiasm? In short, if a person or persons are truly interested in the outcome of any important event, it will show in their attitude, their excitement, and their support.

As I'm thinking all this, I imagine what the followers of Jesus must have been like when he told them that he would need to leave them, but that they would not lose his support nor his friendship. He told them He would send an advocate known as the Spirit of Truth who would guide them in the direction that he himself had taken while He was still with them.

Now switch channels for a moment and ask what the Christian world would look like, would sound like, would be like if the followers of Jesus in the year 2014 showed a little enthusiasm for the work of Jesus in this time and place?

I imagine of course that most in the Community of Christ may feel that the spirit at a basketball game hardly fits the atmosphere of Sunday morning worship. And, yes, that is probably true, at least in Michigan communities. I, being one of those Michigan people, know from experience that it takes a pretty good sermon to get most Community of Christ congregations to cheer or clap.

Perhaps the better question to ask is not about, cheering or not cheering, but about the interior spirit of a congregation. Can anyone detect any life there, any cooperation, or any willingness to make this Community church, be an experience of Christ being present through His Spirit?

Even more specifically, what is the quality of the preaching, the singing, the proclamation of the scriptures? Are we all involved in tending to the needy? Do we have a part in the administration of the Community? Is there evidence that issues of justice and peace are important? In short, can a newcomer detect a certain authentic human spirit among our members? And would Jesus be satisfied with what he might see and hear if he walked in some Sunday?

It is true, of course, that there is no perfect human church, but it would seem at least that everyone; lay people, religious people and ministers, both adults and youngsters would demonstrate the joyful spirit of Jesus. In that instance Pentecost would be happening year round.

Prayer Thought For The Week

We thank you, God, for your ever-present spirit in our lives. Open our eyes and hearts and minds so we may fully experience your presence in this moment and throughout all your creation.

Forgive our selfishness and pride and help us see, with new eyes, the needs of others. Ignite our spirits with a fire of passion that will move us to action for the Earth and all its inhabitants.

We uphold for your blessing the nation and people of Malawi. Touch the hearts of all who are suffering from poverty and HIV/AIDS. Deepen your compassion in our hearts that we might be instruments of your love for people struggling with such injustices in our own communities, as well as throughout the world.

We uphold the concerns of all who have gathered here this day. Bless us with the light of your love as we seek your restoring peace.

Hear our prayer, O God, as today we offer ourselves to be your presence of peace in our families, our communities, our nations, and our world. In the name of Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen.

Stewardship Thought For The Week

Coming upon a pile of cloth that turns out to be a homeless person serves as a reminder that we are surrounded by those in need and continually are challenged in our ability to help.

But we are called to do all that we can. Jesus' observation "For you always have the poor with you.."(Matt. 26:11) doesn't let us off the hook.

Earlier in Matthew, Jesus proclaims "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." (Matt. 19: 21)