



Jesus, the Beloved

Matthew 3:13–17

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.

And a voice from heaven said,

“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

January 1, 2017

Thoughts for the Week

No one else has access to the world you carry around within yourself; you are its custodian and entrance. No one else can see the world the way you see it. No one else can feel your life the way you feel it. Thus it is impossible to ever compare two people because each stands on such different ground. When you compare yourself to others, you are inviting envy into your consciousness; it can be a dangerous and destructive guest.

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

Your soul knows the geography of your destiny. Your soul alone has the map of your future; therefore you can trust this indirect, oblique side of yourself. If you do, it will take you where you need to go, but more important it will teach you a kindness of rhythm in your journey.

To See The World Differently, Listen

It's a neat comparison of two senses which most of us use without thinking twice. And it's a reminder that often we are quick to speak, wanting our voice to be heard, rather than listening carefully.

So, I wonder whether there are things we need to see differently, and who or what we might need to listen to, in order to do so. It's true that to hear another person's experience in life, helps us to get a different, broader perspective on the world around us. Over time we begin to see the world differently.

Maybe the local news involving young people will cause some people to see them in a particularly negative light. Yet I wonder what of their world is fully listened to or understood by those who are quickest to judge.

In our busy lives, real listening takes time. True listening involves not finishing other people's sentences for them – but waiting to hear exactly what the other person wants to say. And listening to the sometimes agonizing silences as well as the sounds. Listening to the emotions behind the words and the expressions on people's faces.

Someone once said that we are blessed with two ears and one mouth, and should therefore use them proportionately, i.e., twice as much listening as speaking.

Who will you lend your ears to this week? You may see the world differently as a consequence.

I remember hearing a story of a man that had been a conscientious objector many years ago. Ironically he has been fighting for peace ever since! He always held International World Peace Day in September as a day to celebrate and discuss the many advances for peace that he had heard or witnessed over the past year. It's easy to think that peace is all about non-violence,

and reconciliation, which of course is true, however, the focus this year was on the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals – which are described as the Building Blocks for Peace.

Remember, Development and Peace go hand in hand.

There is a commitment to work towards these goals by 2030.

- No poverty
- Zero hunger
- Good health and well-being
- Quality Education
- Gender Equality
- Clean Water and Sanitation
- Affordable and Clean energy
- Decent Work and economic growth
- Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Reduced inequalities
- Sustainable cities and communities
- Responsible consumption and production
- Climate action
- Life below water
- Life on Land
- Peace, justice and strong institutions
- Partnerships for the goals

It's easy to feel very distant from the UN when they set these kinds of goals, however if we pause to think about it for a moment, here in our congregation we are contributing to some of these goals in what we do each day. Of course we can always do more. And there are loads of resources available about how to make a difference in our everyday decisions.

Maybe this year we could find some time to look into this further – and think about how we teach the next generation about these things – so that by 2030 the world is a better place for everyone – especially those for whom peace is something that, at the moment, they can only dream of.

Happy New Year

Happiness depends upon your outlook on life. Find the good in everything

Attitude is just as important as ability.- Keep your attitude positive

Passion find yours this year! - Do what you love and you will never work

Positive thoughts make everything easier.- Stay focused and stay positive

You are unique, with special gifts, use them. - Never forget you have talent

New beginnings with a new year.

Enthusiasm a true secret of success.

Wishes may they turn into goals.

Years go by to quickly, enjoy them.- Wisdom from your elders, listen

Energy may you have lots of it. - Take care of yourself

Appreciation of life, don't take it for granted. - Live each day

Relax take the time to relax in this coming year-Keep a balance in your life

Make Your Decisions Count

A new year is a time to get your options clear and to make a significant decision to do what it is that makes you really happy.

The real issue here is that you must take each day as a new opportunity to keep moving towards what you want. Do not look

at what will happen in a year but more what will you do each day you awake to change, to move forward, to put into action

knowing that each day wasted can never be found again. Each day is a new beginning, the chance to do with it what should

be done and not to be seen as simply another day to put in time.

Make It More Than A Dream

Turn those dreams into a realistic plan where you are able to take steps even if it is only one action to keep your dream traveling forward and not stuck on the tracks with no power to the wheels. Wheels of a train only can move with energy and that energy must be directed to the wheels. And, just like a train, life moving forward needs your energy directed to life's wheels. Each revolution of the wheels, each revolution of your steps keeps the train and your life moving – do not waste energy.

My Hope For You

In the coming year may you find,
happiness, use your abilities to solve problems and challenges;
hope, may you always have it, never lose this;
goals, to keep you focus on your dreams; and,
success, by solving your problems, focusing on your goals, and always having hope, success will find you