

Message Title: 'Why Do We Gather in this Place?'

Scripture Source: **2 Peter 1:12-15**

Date: Sunday, September 18, 2016

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### **Beyond Routines and Rituals**

So, why did you come to church this morning? What, or who motivated you to show up? Why do we have a 'worship service' every single week at 10 am? Why bother coming to this place? When we engage in dedicating this new sanctuary a little later on, what is the point? Why do people come to church? Let's chat for a moment about that!

- Felt needs
- Curiosity
- Loneliness
- Social connection
- Soul hunger
- Saying 'yes' to the invitation of a friend or the wording on a sign or web site
- Desire and commitment/habit/guilt

### **Sacred Reminders: 1 Peter 1:12-15**

In preparing this message for this Sunday I was reminded that at the heart of Sunday services is the reality of God. The active presence of God in individual lives and in our family of faith, 'God inhabits the praises of his people.' "Come near to God and he will come near to you." James 4:8

Friends, gathering together on Sundays is largely about being reminded of critically important truths. Reminded of truth, leading to responsiveness to God and his mission in the world we are part of.

What do you and I need to be reminded of? Or maybe learn for the first time?

#### 1. Reminded of the Character of God.

To be brought back to foundational truths regarding the character of God. Why do we need to be reminded about the essence of who God is? Because life often messes with our heads and hearts and we can begin to lose sight of who God is and live unsettled by doubts and distortions of reality. Our perspective can become fuzzy. The flame of hope can begin to flicker and wane.

Psalm 145:8-9, 14-18. Our time of worship through music is often powerful and timely in reminding us of who God is and how much we matter to Him. Illustrate:

Considering the life of Jesus thoughtfully reminds us of who God is and who we are in his eyes.

Jesus said: "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." John 14:9

Let's be reminded through an encounter involving Jesus of the character of God and our value to him.

**Encounter #1:** Mark 1: 40-42 – a leper cries out to Jesus and the response of Jesus is breathtaking. Imagine yourself in that place. A setting of isolation, shame, and loneliness...that's the place lepers existed, cut off from warm human connection.

Jesus was deeply moved by his plight and plea. He was 'filled with compassion' and did something largely unheard of. He entered the man's world and engaged with him through a touch of compassion and power. The man would never be the same.

**Reminders for us:** Individuals and their world matter to Jesus. That includes you. God's heart brims with compassion over the suffering of people, emotional, mental, physical and spiritual.

The power of God can give us strength and courage to face the hard realities of life.

When you think about this simple yet poignant story, what are you reminded of?

## 2. Reminded of the Mission of Jesus, God's Son

Let's remember his mission by considering a second encounter Jesus had with a person.

**Encounter #2:** Luke 19:1-10 a man named Zacchaeus. Brief bio...not highly esteemed because of gouging practices, wealthy but restless and spiritually hungry and unsettled. Zacchaeus is on a 'seek and connect' mission.

Jesus is on a 'seek and rescue mission'...one life at a time. Vs. 10 Jesus is about providing salvation to lost souls...salvation from the penalty of sin, the degrading and life draining power of sin and one day, the presence of sin.

**Reminders for us:** Jesus is first and foremost the Saviour. And we are in desperate need to experiencing forgiveness of sins and the power of to live a whole new life.

Maybe you see something of yourself in Z, a spiritual hunger and restlessness churning within you. You matter to God and his love, grace and power can reach you and powerfully effect you, if you are open, like Z was.

As followers of Jesus we have been entrusted with this life changing mission of Jesus, to be involved in reaching people with the gospel message of Jesus and helping people become followers of Jesus. Matthew 28:18-20

In this place we are committed to teaching the life and message of Jesus through music, arts, personal stories and biblical teaching. Are we clearly and passionately resolute that this will be a place where all are welcome and questions can be asked, without condemnation or criticism?

## 3. These sacred reminders are intended to lead to Responsiveness to God and others.

What kind of responses? Gratitude. Obedience to God. Trust in God's promises.

Engagement in God's mission, entering into the lives of others with compassionate acts of service that offer both spiritual hope and practical help.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 and Psalm 116:12-14

What might responsiveness look like to you...today? An honest prayer to God? Exploring what spiritual salvation and a relationship with God involves? Investigating ways in which to grow deeper in your relationship with God? Looking into opportunities to serve people, inside and outside these 4 walls? Cultivating relationships that can build you up and where you can do the same for others? What might responsiveness look like to you today, in this place?

Next Sunday we will explore what is required to live out the mission of Jesus, Sundays and between Sundays...and how you can be involved in meaningful ways!