Pastor’s Blog for July 16, 2021 Blast

Broken Bow provided an exciting welcome for Kelly and me this past weekend! In addition to a wonderful picnic at Tomahawk Park there was a great natural fireworks display courtesy of Nebraska weather! We were blessed that the storm was not as severe here as in other parts of the state. The food and fellowship at the picnic were really great! Thanks to Sandi Manning for organizing it and to Peg Walters and her crew for the delicious sloppy joes! (I also appreciate that Peg and the hospitality committee have been providing name tags for folks on Sundays. This helps me a great deal as I learn your names!)

We have now begun a series of sermons on “Forging Our Covenant.” I am exploring some Biblical principles from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount that will shape the Accountability Covenant that I will be making with the Staff Parish Relations Committee. An additional resource that I am drawing upon for this series of sermons is the book The Four Agreements by don Miguel Ruiz in which he shares the wisdom of his ancestors about how to lead a life of peace and integrity.

This past Sunday the title of my sermon was “Let Your Word Be Your Word.” I intend to speak (and write) carefully as your pastor so that my words are true and do no harm. I also intend to “under-promise” and “over-deliver.”

This coming Sunday the title of my sermon is “Turn the Other Cheek.” Of all the lessons that Jesus taught, this is one of the most difficult to follow. As human beings we are hard-wired with the “fight or flight” instinct. When we are confronted by someone who is aggressive and hostile we experience an almost uncontrollable desire to either strike back or to run away. When we react in this way we usually make a bad situation worse! This cycle of reactivity and revenge often expands to include others while spiraling out of control.

To overcome this basic instinct means that we must rise above our natural way of operating to the true height of our humanity. This transformation is possible only with the grace of God! With the help of the Holy Spirit we can stay engaged with the person confronting us but refrain from counterattacking. By listening in a non-anxious way we may gain greater understanding of the other person while reducing the emotional heat of the situation.

Living in the kingdom of God is a glorious and beautiful thing but it is not easy! Jesus knew how difficult it is but he found a way to model this new way of living in his own life. When we ask the question, “What would Jesus do?” the answer is often: “Turn the other cheek.” Please join me on Sunday (either in person or through the live feed on our Facebook page) to hear more about this.

Pastor Phil