

Means of Grace Clergy

Talk #7

Saturday

Length of Talk: **30 Minutes**

PURPOSE:

The means of grace are human experiences we participate in with liturgy and symbolism to recognize God's continual participation to keep alive our relationship with Christ. Sacramental moments are times God visits in a special way to affirm the relationship He extends to us through His covenant promises. God uses a variety of ways to visit us but Christians have accepted certain rites for corporate celebration and individual reflection. Sacred moments occur through our memory we have another opportunity to rehearse our acceptance of Christ as Lord and Savior.

OUTLINE:

Scripture Reading: Luke 22: 55-62 or Luke 4: 16-22

Definition of Means of Grace: Sacramental moments celebrating God's love and presence in a special way, special visit of the Holy Spirit by acts of worship instituted by Christ and celebrated by Christians and a sacred moment in which Christ is represented.

I. Brief history of the Sacraments of the Church.

1. Two sacraments have been recognized by the churches, baptism and communion, during the first 12 or 13 centuries after Christ.
2. The Council of Trent (1545) attempted to respond to the sacramental needs of people by instituting five more: penance, holy orders, matrimony, confirmation and extreme unction.
 - a. The Protestant reformation resulted in many churches returning to two sacraments.
 - b. One Protestant Church adds foot washing to its sacraments as an act of servant hood.

II. The sacred moments have a very distinct relationship with the Church of Jesus Christ.

1. The intent of these moments are to make the presence of God more real in our everyday life and purpose.
 - a. The church represents Christ in the general ministry of reconciliation.
 - b. The church is founded on the divine action of God through grace and revelation. (Grace: visible sign of God's Love) (Revelation: self-disclosing act of God)
2. The church should become the focal point for experiencing God's love and seeing Him face to face.

- a. These moments should involve not only voicing but every sense: sight, sound, intelligence, emotion and insight.

IV. Sacred moments as an answer to human needs.

1. Baptism is a sacred moment of invitation by God and used as the mark to the beginning of a new life in Him.
 - a. The Church proclaims you are loved, wanted and a child of God.
 - b. Water is used a symbol of purification, a mark for the beginning of a new life with Christ and is spiritual response.
 - c. The congregation confirms God's acceptance by promising to surround the one baptized with love and support in the Christian Journey.

V. Prayer leads the Christian to an authentic relationship with God.

1. Prayer is a God established dialogue between God and man.
 - a. Prayer is a relationship through communication with God and not just a time for a wish list.
2. God speaks through our mind, emotions, memory, imagination, dreams and His word.
 - a. He uses intercessory prayer to guide our responses to a situation. God is already working through love, healing body and spirit.
 - b. A means of grace is accomplished by making a prayer list.
 - c. Prayer is the opportunity to practice being in the presence of God.

VI. Confirmation fills the need for confirmation by God and Christian friends.

1. Confirmation is the personal acceptance of the relationship offered at your baptism and nurture in the interim.
 - a. Some churches (Southern Baptist, Eastern Orthodox, etc.) compress the invitation and the acceptance into one event. (Adult baptism is synonymous with confirmation)
 - b. Christ is presented, individuals accept Him and the commitment is made to represent Christ to the world.
2. Confirmation is knowing what God accomplished by sending His Son to the world for our salvation.
 - a. We accept what God did for us through Jesus Christ and repent of our sins.
 - b. We will demonstrate a change of heart, act on our new commitment, die to self and live for others. (Tell about Nichodemus John 3: 1-21)

VII. Ordination means commissioning by a specific church for ministry to a community in God's name.

1. Christians are all called to minister! Clergy are ordained primarily to care for souls but also to administer the sacraments.
 - a. Ministry implies the edification and instruction of faith community.
 - b. The minister must give defense for the Word of God, preach and represent Christ to the congregation.
2. Helpful Scriptures: **Hebrews 2: 1-18** Redemption by Christ, **Hebrews 3: 1-6**

Christ is the model for ministry, **John 10: 1-21** Christ is the Good Shepherd, **Acts 26: 1-32** Christ calls Paul to the ministry, **John 17: 1-26** Priestly prayer of, Jesus, **Matthew 28: 18-20** The Apostles share in Christ's ministry **Note:** Ordination gives the authority for the administration of the sacraments.

VII. Marriage is commissioned by God, in His presence, for man and woman to be joined together for life.

1. Marriage can be a worldly arrangement but should be a task of 100 % dedication from man and woman.
 - a. It has a sacramental quality and provides the impact of divine grace on our daily lives.
2. Marriage that represents Christ is the Church and the church is the body of Christ.
 - a. Marriage should become the gateway where divine grace can enter and saturate the whole structure of community life.
 - b. The New Testament makes parallels between the marriage bond and Christ's relationship to the church.

VIII. Forgiveness is the grace God offers humanity and healing is restoring a person into a full relationship with Him.

1. Jesus began His ministry with baptism for repentance of sins (John 1: 19-34)
 - a. Jesus gave the disciples His power to forgive sins in His name. (John 20: 23 & Matthew 16: 19)
 - b. Death can be overcome by the power of God's grace that restores life to new meaning, purpose and completeness.
2. Christ was sent to earth to die for our sins but spiritual and physical healing were central parts of His ministry. (Matthew 9: 18-34)
 - a. Christ commissioned His disciples to continue in His footsteps and reach out to people. (Luke 9: 1-6)
 - b. Healing needs to be returned to the church and not something done for showmanship or money.
 - c. The healing ministry is an opportunity to represent Christ with death being the final healing and complete union with Christ.

IX. Holy communion is a way the Lord gave us to celebrate the presence of God.

1. Jesus shared communion with His disciples and it was practiced by the early church.
 - a. Communion is an outward sign of an inner and spiritual grace.
 - b. The presence of Christ is celebrated in holy communion telling of His grace to all mankind.
2. Jesus had the Last Supper with friends He loved and so should we in the Christian community.
 - a. Jesus accepted His death to forgive sins in the Last Supper.
 - b. Holy Communion reminds us of our death and we should live for to serve other people and Him.