

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - May 11, 2009

The Pastor's Pen

Allow me to introduce you to four men. But wait, I don't know that I can. I don't know their names. I've never learned their names. In fact, I've never heard their names. These four men brought a friend to Jesus. That's all we know about them. So let me introduce them to you this way. I want you to meet "Rope-holders." Rope-holder I, Rope-holder II, Rope-holder III, and Rope-holder IV.

Rope-holders I, II, III, and IV had a friend, and their friend was paralyzed. Rope-holders thought that if their friend were to see Jesus, he might be healed of his paralysis. But their friend had no way to get to Jesus. He was confined to his house, paralyzed.

Have you ever met someone who was paralyzed by fear? They can't make a decision because they are afraid they'll make the wrong one. Or they won't dare to try something because they are afraid they can't do it. Or they have been so abused in life that they can't venture to do anything. It is quite possible to be paralyzed by fear such that there is no real, true life.

Have you ever met anyone that was paralyzed by guilt? They've been dumped on so much by others and made to feel guilty that they can't see themselves as having worth as a person. Or they have done something so bad in their life that they feel they can never be forgiven. What they've done is just too bad to be forgiven. Guilt can be a real paralyzing force in people's lives.

Or have you ever met someone paralyzed by sin? They are caught so deeply in behaviors that go against that which is right that they can't see what they are doing to themselves and to others. They are blind to their situation. They are lost. It's like they are in a maze that has no exit. Every decision they make and everything they do just leads them deeper and deeper into sin and sin's consequences. These persons are paralyzed by sin. They cannot extricate themselves from their current circumstances.

Well, Rope-holders I, II, III, and IV knew their friend would never get to Jesus on his own, and for him to see Jesus was a chance for him to be healed. But he needed help to have that audience with Jesus. So they picked him up on his mat and carried him to the house where Jesus was teaching. But when they got there, the crowd was so large in the house and outside the house, that they couldn't make their way into the house. After all that trouble and now they couldn't get their paralyzed friend in to see Jesus. But they were not about to give up.

So they went up on the roof of the house, and they dug through the roof. Once they had made a big enough hole, they let their friend down through the roof right there in front of Jesus. Imagine these four friends of this paralyzed man letting their friend down slowly into the room in front of Jesus. Rope-holders I, II, III, and IV exerted a lot of effort on behalf of their friend, but it was worth it. Jesus as soon as he saw their friend healed him. Jesus said to him, "Son, your sins are forgiven you. Get up and walk," and he did. He was healed. He was healed in part because his four friends dared to bring him to Jesus, and more than that, his four friends dared to be rope-holders for him.

Do you have a friend that needs to meet Jesus? Do you have a friend that is paralyzed by sin, or guilt, or fear? Jesus can help that friend. Jesus can heal that friend. And the rest of the world doesn't have to know our name for us to be effective in introducing him or her to Jesus. All the rest of the world needs to know is that we joined that host of rope-holders across the centuries who have introduced their friends to Jesus whatever it took to do so.

Allow me to introduce you to four men named "Rope-holder." These men believed Jesus could and would heal their friend. These men had faith in Jesus. These men believed that Jesus would look with compassion upon their friend, and he did. These men knew Jesus as one who loved. And these men wouldn't let their friend remain paralyzed any longer if he could be healed. These men cared about their friend and loved their friend. They cared about him and loved him enough to introduce him to Jesus, albeit in a rather unorthodox way.

So if I were to introduce you to someone else sometime, could I introduce you as "Rope-holder number V?" Just something to think about. Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

GRADUATION LUNCH TO HONOR OUR GRADUATES - SUN. MAY 17TH

This Sunday, May 17th, we will have a luncheon to honor our four 2009 graduating seniors. This year's graduates are: Caroline Boston, Boomer Harris, Ann Paley and Kameron Slater. Everyone is invited to join us in the CLC following the 10:30 a.m. service for food and fellowship as we honor our seniors.

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson
Freddie Mae Jackson
Oscar and Agnes McCarter
Bill Evans
Scottie McMackin
Rev. Clifton Johnston
T. J. Moore
Norman Marston
Jean Cone
Gracie Henson
Scott Dean
Georgia Childress
Brian Beller
Al Harlan
Barbara Harlan
Hannah Englett
Olivia Grace Moody
Herman Dunkin
Herb Magee

OPEN ALTAR FLOWER DATES

May 17th and May 24th are open dates for altar flowers. Please call the church office if you would like to place flowers on one of those dates.

Attention: Linda Sowell continues to send cards to church members/new people, but she needs people to call her with information (on those who have missed, are sick or are visiting the church) Linda's number is *****

I Will Be Loyal

**To The United Methodist Church And
Support It With: My Presence:**

Sunday, May 11, 2009

8:15 a.m. Worship Attendance.....43

Sunday school Attendance.....87

10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....94

My Service: Sunday, May 17, 2009

Acolytes: Brianna Snider & Alexis Fann

Loaves and Fishes: Tues. & Thurs.

Tues. May 19 Loulie Brown, Anita Marston & Jerry Gibbs

Thurs. May 21 Joan Cochran, Joyce Holmes & Jerry Gibbs

NASHVILLE SOUNDS BASEBALL UNITED METHODIST NIGHT

Nashville Sounds baseball will host a United Methodist night on June 28, 2009 at Greer Stadium. There will be a concert at 4:30 p.m. and the Sounds vs. Oklahoma City Redhawks game will begin at 6:00 p.m. The \$12 ticket includes hotdog and soft drink. You may sign up at the church office.

MARY-MARTHA CIRCLE MEETING

The Mary-Martha Circle will meet on Tuesday, May 19th, at 6:30 p.m.