

March 3, 2024

Third Sunday in Lent: "Becoming Truly Alive: When Everything Gives Joy!"

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor: Steve Ramer

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SEASON OF LENT

Stones come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. Some are given great monetary value and some are very useful to sculpt statues or build structures that can stand a thousand years. However, most just lie there, often getting in the way. Yet God calls us to become "living stones!" What does this mean? How can this transformation happen? Who are these living stones in our midst and which ones, yet unearthed, will also spring to life?

1. GATHERING

Musical Prelude (Stan)

Call to Worship (Based on Psalm 19)

Leader: The heavens proclaim the glory of God and the sky expresses God's handiwork.

People: Without saying a word each day and every night pours forth exhalation and knowledge of our creator!

L: Among the heavens, God has made a tent for the sun and comes out every day with great joy like a bridegroom who anticipates his bride and like a fast runner who can't wait to run the race.

P: The rules God desires us to live by are perfect and they revive our souls.

L: God's decrees are always true, clear, sure, make our hearts sing, and make the most simple of us wise!

P: To follow the commandment of the LORD, opens our eyes.

L: God's will is more desirable than 24-carat gold and sweeter than honey dripping from the honeycomb.

P: In following God's will, there is both warning and great reward.

L: Save me Oh God from those faults that I cannot see. Do not allow me to become conceited and do not let my bad choice take control of me.

All: May the words I choose and desire of my heart always return to you, O LORD, because you are my rock and my redeemer.

Opening Prayer (based on Psalm 51:1-17)

God, you always show mercy because your love is steady like a boulder! Please forget all my failures and scrub me from head to toe with soap and hot water to wash off the stains. My faults are many and you would be justified in punishing me harshly. But instead, you desire what is true in me and what I hold deep within my heart. Purge me with strong laxatives and remove my stains with a powerful bleach. Create a heart that is true and fill me with your spirit. Restore my joy and sustain me when I'm weak. God, open my lips so I can sing your praises. I know that you take no delight in dead, ritual sacrifices, and are pleased when I open myself up to the brokenness of the world around me.

Congregational Singing

Welcome and Passing of the Peace

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also, with you.

All: Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

"We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive." — Albert Einstein

2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scriptures: Luke 19:36-42

36 As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. 37 As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, 38 saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." 40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

41 As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."

SERMON: "Becoming Truly Alive: When Everything Gives Joy!"



Here at FCMF we have witnessed firsthand some huge transformations in the lives of many. Many of these now "living stones" went unnoticed by our society, while others obstinately kept getting in the way, often refusing to budge.

Like JD last week, Santana is another example of "a stone that has come to life" that we use to build a true spiritual house.

Lives that are too valuable to return to destructive ways and lives where everything can bring us joy!

"Transformation has little to do with intelligence, willpower, or perfection. It has everything to do with honesty, humility, willingness, and surrender." — Richard Rohr

3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Congregational Singing

Response

Joys and Concerns

Offering & Music

Sending (based on Matthew 6:11-6, 16-21)

If you practice your piety so others will see it, God will ignore it. If you make a big deal out giving money to the poor, God thinks nothing about it. When you pray, don't be like those hypocrites who love to stand in church and pray loudly; God prefers to sit and talk with you alone. When you fast, don't look sad, like hypocrites, who disfigure their faces and try to look obviously miserable. When you do deny yourself anything to spread God's Kingdom do it with joy. And above all, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures here on earth, but store up treasures in God's domain. After all, where you keep your treasures, that is where your heart really is."

"You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty." — Mahatma Gandhi