### Warm Springs Church Logo June 25

# What Makes A Good Day?

**Genesis 1:31 NIV**

**God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the sixth day.**

Are You Having A Good Day?

What is so impressive about the human mind is that it can take an immense assortment of data and process it within split seconds. However, the brain doesn’t always come to the most accurate assessment. Sometimes the brain malfunctions and judges things poorly. I had the opportunity this past Tuesday to see this take place in real time. Our church is sharing with another church an internet service based upon dish technology. We have a router that wirelessly gives everyone in the building access to the internet. The only problem is that the internet went down Tuesday. This wasn’t a terrible turn of events for me though because there is a certain amount of freedom in not having access to the internet and I was able to get quite a bit done that day. But later that evening I discovered that our church sign wasn’t lit and upon further investigation all the lights on the sides of the building were not working either. I thought I knew what the problem was with the lights; someone from the other church had mistakenly turned off a switch that I had warned their leadership not to use. So I brought in the Associate Pastor to the room where the switch was to gently remind her church not to touch the particular switch controlling the outer lights. The only problem was that the switch was actually still in the “on” position which meant that was not the cause of the outer lights and the sign not being lit. Embarrassed to have called Shijung over to chastise her, I spent more than thirty minutes trying to find the cause of the power outage. The next day one of the trustees came over to see what the problem was and I explained to him my theory. Because the dish was close to where the power to the lights originated, it must be that the problem was that a rat or something else had broken through the power line and caused both the internet and light to not work. That was my thought and I was pretty sure I was right. When I sent out an email to several people in the church telling them about the problem, I felt sure we needed someone to crawl up in the attic and see what caused the loss of power to the dish and the exterior lights. I was certain, with the evidence I had, that the two problems were connected but they weren’t. Later that day I got an email suggesting that I turn off the router and leave it off for thirty seconds and then turn it back on. Not only did the router start working but the internet was fixed. But why weren’t the exterior lights working? Again an email suggestion came. On the side of the building is a gfi power receptacle. Push the reset button and see if it works. It did! The problem was not a broken wire up in the attic. The two problems were not connected. With my mind working feverishly to solve the problem of the down internet and exterior lights not working I was completely wrong in my assessment. Is it possible that we can take all the information we have, think carefully, and still get it wrong? Is it possible that we might not be right when it comes to deciding if a day is good or bad?

If I were to ask you what makes a good day for you, how would you answer? Would it be any day that you are on vacation? Would a good day be a day when you get to sleep later than usual? Perhaps a good day is when you get something accomplished at work or you are able to read a good book. Is it a good day if you do well on an examination or you buy something on sale? Is your idea of a good day the one where you figure out how to fix something that is broken or you find something that you lost? How do you decide if a day is a good day or a bad day?

Let’s take a close look at one particular day as an example of how to examine this question more effectively. In Matthew 8 is described a series of events of a day involving Jesus and His disciples. It started with Jesus healing the servant of a Centurion. The servant was not even in that town but in another town and the very hour Jesus said it, the servant was healed. Was it a good day or a bad day? After that, Jesus and the disciples went to Peter’s mother-in-law’s house and there they found her sick with a raging fever. Jesus touched her and immediately she was well. Was it a good day or a bad day? In the evening, a small crowd arrived at the house bringing the sick and demon possessed and Jesus healed all the sick and drove out all the demons. So was this a good day or a bad day? The crowd became too much though so Jesus ordered that the disciples and him get in the boat and cross to the other side of the lake. But before they went, two people came to Jesus wanting to be followers but Jesus was short with them, not accepting their weak faith and commitment. Was it a good day or a bad day? The disciples finally got into the boat and started sailing across the Sea of Galilee but without warning a terrifying storm arose and the waves started sweeping over the boat. Was it a good day or a bad day?

There is an idea that is nearly universal that we can figure most things out on our own and this paradigm to a large degree determines our assessment of our days. For example, when Peter and James and John went with Jesus up onto a mountain to pray, Jesus’ face and clothes changed and became bright as lightning and Moses and Elijah appeared to them also in “glorious splendor”. After the two prophets left, Peter had the great idea that to memorialize the moment, they should build three shelters…one for Elijah, one for Moses and one for Jesus. Now if he had done that, would it have been a good day? What seemed so sensible and appropriate at the moment, the honoring of Jesus, Elijah and Moses was complete blasphemy in fact. A cloud suddenly enveloped the disciples and Jesus and a voice from out of the cloud rebuked them decidedly, **“This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.”** So if the disciples went ahead with their plan of making three shelters, deciding that Jesus was at the same level as Moses and Elijah, would it have been a good day?

In Matthew 8, the passage we discussed earlier, a man came to Jesus wanting to follow him. First though, before joining the group, he asked permission of Jesus to go home and bury his father, the implication being that he would then catch up with the group. The request seemed reasonable enough. Yet Jesus’ response was swift and decided. “Follow me and let the dead bury their own dead.” Now many have attempted to soften the reply by indicating that the man actually wanted to go home and stay with his dad until he some day…or some year passed away. That may be so but it is beside the point. If that man had ignored Jesus’ clear rebuke and made his way home to dad anyway, would it have been a good day?

Matthew 12: 1-3 is the fascinating description of Jesus’ disciples being rebuked for what was deemed to be their disrespectful and ungodly behavior. Jesus and the disciples were walking through a grain-field on the Sabbath and the whole group was ravenous. The disciples did what any of us would have done; they picked some of the grain and ate it as they walked. There were Pharisees in the group though and several of them were incensed by Jesus’ cavalier attitude toward the Sabbath. They were certain the disciples were violating Sabbath laws by picking the grain. Without considering what Jesus’ response was to them, suppose these Pharisees had their way with the disciples and convinced them to stop eating the grain in the field. Would their success at putting an end to the grain picking on the Sabbath have made the day a good day? Now we know already that Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for judging the behavior of the disciples but if Jesus had not been there and they had effectively made their point about the Sabbath and picking grain and convinced the disciples they were in the wrong, would it have been a good day?

The same could be asked of the day the disciples got upset with the people of a Samaritan village who refused to welcome Jesus and the band traveling down to Jerusalem. There was no lunch offered, no housing provided, just a dismissive nod and a wave goodbye. James and John were so incensed that they asked Jesus if they should call fire down from heaven and destroy the villagers. Now we cannot get sidetracked by the strange assumption they made that they could pray and call fire down from heaven and consume the people. The point is they wanted to do that. What if they did accomplish this and fire had come down from heaven and burnt to a crisp everyone in the village. Would that have made it a good day? Or, supposing they never got to that point, they just wanted fire to come down from heaven and destroy everyone in the town. If they had walked on down the road with that feeling still raging within, would it have been a good day?

Now Jesus made a most interesting comment as he talked with the famous “rich young ruler” of Luke 18. When the young man approached the Lord, he addressed Jesus as “Good teacher”. Now this was certainly a respectful form of address but Jesus was not so impressed. His reply was biting. **"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good — except God alone.** (Luke 18:19-20 NIV) This is most informative if we can get past the seeming rudeness of the retort. Jesus made it perfectly clear without any wiggle room that there is no one good…just God. This is not self-deprecation: it is stating the clear fact. Nothing good exists except what is in God, from God and with God. The source of any good is God and without Him there is no good. Good is not a relative term; good compared to not so good. Good is determined by its source. From God and it is good, outside of Him and it is not. You and I are not the source of good and we do not decide if something is good or not. Good is not an arbitrary assessment we make; good is determined by how anything at any moment relates to God. Take the Lord out of a thought, out of an idea, out of a behavior and it is no longer good. Regardless of how an event may turn, how a circumstance may look, it is good if your eyes are fixed upon God and your heart is determined to follow Him. The command of Hebrews 12: 2 to fix our eyes upon Jesus is not a symbolic gesture, it is an act of the will to look to Christ for everything from how to think about something to how to act. Take your eyes off the Lord and what can seem great, like Peter walking on water can become a disaster in a moment as he began to sink with his eyes on the waves.

Good is a quite simple matter. Anything that flows out of God is good, anything that doesn’t is not. A day centered upon Christ is good; a day focused on whatever else is not. Smile at a friend with your mind on Christ and it is good, smile at him for any other reason and it isn’t. Give your friend some help on his homework because God pointed you that way and it is good, do it for any other reason and it isn’t. Fix dinner out of your love for Jesus and it is good, do it because it is your job or your chore or your attempt to make people happy and it isn’t. Any disaster can be averted with your eyes fixed on Jesus and any success can be a disaster with your eyes somewhere else. It is a struggle to keep your attention centered on Christ…you must decide to do it. But the good and the bad are so close within you, there is no other way to be certain of what you have. Make this your simple prayer as you move through your day. It is easy to remember but every effort of Satan will keep you from it. Say it as you start to work, as you begin your meal, as you enter class, while you wait for the dentist. “This is for Jesus!” As soon as you say it, your eyes are fixed on Him. “This is for Jesus” while you take your medicine, as you mow the lawn, during your moments of prayer, while you are finishing your project at work, through your stroll at Costco. “This is for Jesus” is the start of a good day. Fix your eyes on Christ and fight with passion to keep them there.