

2018 FHUMC Winter Message Series: “At the Rail”

Series Lens: Using Peter's responses to Jesus as a way for us to respond to Jesus.

Series Theme Verse: “When you call me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:12-13

Sunday, Jan. 21, 2018

Message #3: “Where Else Can We Go?”

Theme: Sticking w/Jesus because He offers eternal truth that touches the depths of my soul.

Scripture: John 6:60-69 (Jesus asks if the disciples will abandon Him, and Peter says no!)

Peter's Response: “Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.’” -John 6:68-69

Memory Verse: ““You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”” -John 6:69

Blurb: Following Jesus is not about hearing what we want and having God bless us in ways that we choose. It is receiving His words as life and following when it is not easy, or what we like. Yet this unlikely path is life abundant and eternal. This Sunday we'll have the chance to recommit to following Jesus His way and embrace life!

WORSHIP OUTLINE:

Opening Song: Hymn sing

Welcome: -Pastor David

PP: Picture of David on historic Class Meeting benches at John Street UMC, New York

Grow Moment: Joining one of the church-wide small groups.

PP: Memory Verse

Memory Verse: ““You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”” -John 6:69

Memory Verse

Worship Set: - Sanctify

Our God Saves (Kids lead actions)

Your Love Defends Me

Different

Worship prayer - Andrew

Skit: “The Fisherman in the Coffee Shop 3” (Andrew and Michael)

Offering: “I Will Be Found By You” -Sanctify

Bumper Video

Message: Where Else Can We Go?

PP#1: At the Rail

Where Else Can We Go?

“Samuel said, ‘Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening.’” -1 Samuel 3:10b

At the Rail. Where Else Can We Go? 1 Samuel 3:10b “Samuel said, ‘Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening.’”

PP#2: *Picture of a parent and teen not seeing eye-to-eye.*

A few years ago we were visiting my cousins in Florida. The last of their four children were graduating. My daughter had just become a teenager, and I was already realizing my limitations for the parenting task. So I asked the mom how she did it...how she raised four incredible teens and had launched them all into college, marriage, work, or whatever. And all of them were—and still are!—passionate Christians.

I’ll never forget what she said. She didn’t have to stop and think about it. She didn’t joke or get that wispy, distant look in her eye. She just looked directly at me and said, “I always try to speak words of life into them.”

[To Reese:] Do you remember that, Dear? You were there.

PP#3: *Image of teens from <https://seekingalpha.com/article/4101268-facebook-snap-tale-teens>*

Teenagers have such a difficult time. Don’t you agree, teens? You are new at thinking critically and deeply, and yet you have that incredible radar for discerning what we really care about, and what we mean rather than what we say. You live in a shallow world of fun and emotions and the moment, while at the same time you’re wrestling with the most important questions of life: What’s life all about? Why are we here? Why am *I* here? What’s the point? What is real? What lasts?

It’s so sad that teens are having the hardest time sorting out these discoveries. In a culture of nearly limitless knowledge, social connection, and exposure to the new and different, coupled with unprecedented wealth and opportunity, teens are at an all-time high in anxiety, despair, depression, suicide, drifting and confused, latching on to platforms and causes as lenses to make sense of the world and themselves. A study of high school seniors done in 1985—that’s my generation—had 18% describe themselves as overwhelmed. By 2010 it had climbed to 29%. In 2016, 41% of high school seniors described themselves as “overwhelmed.”

(Source:<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/11/magazine/why-are-more-american-teenagers-than-ever-suffering-from-severe-anxiety.html>)

Part of that problem is that we adults, who share and tell from our lives, are not offering teens words of life. It’s because we are all struggling. We don’t do very well sorting out the big questions. As a whole culture we are *all* more adrift...confused...overwhelmed.

PP#4: *Image of a mom embracing her teen, relationship being restored.*

My cousin's purpose, as a mom, was to speak words of life into her kids. It's because they need that so desperately! If you've got teens, take this to heart. It is a key ingredient for a full life.

It's true for us all, regardless of our ages. We yearn for words of life, words that speak to that which is behind what we can see and hear and touch. We long for purpose and meaning, like almost as if we were created for it! (!) We crave connection of who we are deep inside, to that which is timeless, and transcendent, and *real*.

We fill our lives with daily busy-ness: work, chores, routines, errands, drama, and fun experiences, all while keeping that deep look into life itself distracted. Only occasionally do we stop and ask, "What am I doing, anyway? Who am I? What am I to do?"

That's why, here in January, we are going to the prayer rail. It's a pause long enough to ask those deep questions of our own lives. Later today we'll all be cheering for the Vikings, right? Or perhaps attending Footloose. But this morning, we are going to spend some time at the prayer rail to hear words of life.

PP#5: *Image of people leaving Jesus when He was teaching.*

Jesus walked around speaking words of life. He talked about full life, eternal life some day, and abundant life right now. Maybe people aren't all that different across time. For people flocked to hear Jesus speak.

After feeding the 5,000 (well, probably 10,000 - 15,000, actually), Jesus spent time at the rail to hear God's words of life. Then He walked out on the water to meet His disciples. That was last week's story. Today we keep going.

The next day, they arrived back in Capernaum, and Jesus tells the crowd that not only did He feed the crowd with physical food the day before, but He did so to demonstrate that He Himself was the Bread of Life. The crowd pressed in...this is good!

But then Jesus said that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to be saved. Woah! Real turn off. But Jesus kept going. He said that He was the one from heaven. And when He did, people started leaving.

We know now that Jesus was referring to Holy Communion as a way of eating and drinking in order to remember and experience Jesus' death on the cross as a sacrifice for our forgiveness. But to them, it didn't make sense. And then, when Jesus suggested He was from God, people turned away.

PP#6: John 6:60-69 (CEB)

60 Many of His disciples who heard this said, "This message is harsh. Who can hear it?"

61 Jesus knew that the disciples were grumbling about this and He said to them, "Does this offend you?"

John, chapter 6, verse 60. "Many of His disciples who heard this said, 'This message is harsh. Who can hear it?' [Have you ever been confused by what Jesus said? You're not alone! So did those who were there and saw it first hand! I'm not so sure He made any more sense to those who heard His complete messages. So, you are in good company.] 61 Jesus knew that the disciples were grumbling about this and He said to them, 'Does this offend you?'"

The words spoken by the Bread of Life don't necessarily fit with what we think. They may be confusing. They may be coming from a very different perspective. They may actually offend what

we want, expect, or how we think. They may not agree with our words. Many times my cousin's kids thought she was out to lunch when she talked to them. But she kept it up. And so did Jesus.

PP#7: Where Can We Go? You have the words of eternal life!

1. The words of life can be offensive

Jesus is offensive, even to us who follow Him! It's so hard to surrender totally to Him, because He asks us to give up all of our self-interest. To find life we must first lose it. Jesus said that! To be first, you must be last. Jesus again. Do good to those who persecute you. Yep, Jesus! I am the Bread of Life, and to find God you must feed on me. Still Jesus!

The crowds who come for the miracles, who want the words of life to fit into their worldviews, drift away when Jesus says you must receive Him only! Offensive.

PP#8: John 6:60-69 (CEB)

62 What if you were to see the Human One going up where He was before? 63 The Spirit is the one who gives life and the flesh doesn't help at all. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 Yet some of you don't believe." Jesus knew from the beginning who wouldn't believe and the one who would betray Him. 65 He said, "For this reason I said to you that none can come to me unless the Father enables them to do so." 66 At this, many of His disciples turned away and no longer accompanied Him.

Jesus keeps going. Verse 62: "What if you were to see the Human One [meaning Himself] going up where He was before? [Would you believe that I come from God if you would see me go back to God?] 63 The Spirit is the one who gives life and the flesh doesn't help at all. [If I am not from God, who is Spirit, then I can't have words of life, because words of life come from God!] The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. [My words are life because I am life. My words are spirit because I am spirit.] 64 Yet some of you don't believe.' Jesus knew from the beginning who wouldn't believe and [even] the one who would betray Him. 65 He said, 'For this reason I said to you that none can come to me unless the Father enables them to do so.' [It is by God's grace that we become aware that Jesus is abundant life!] 66 At this, many of His disciples turned away and no longer accompanied Him."

PP#9: Where Can We Go? You have the words of eternal life!

1. The words of life can be offensive
2. Jesus speaks words of life

Offensive. But real. Life-giving. Touching that longing deep inside.
Jesus speaks words of life and spirit.
Do we turn away, or do we listen?

PP#10: John 6:60-69 (CEB)

67 Jesus asked the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?"

Verse 67, "Jesus [then turns to His closest followers, Peter and the other 11, and] asked the Twelve, 'Do you also want to leave?'" Are you going to listen, or turn away, too?

PP#11: 1 Samuel 3:8-10

8 A third time the Lord called Samuel. He got up, went to Eli, and said, "I'm here. You called me?"

Then Eli realized that it was the Lord who was calling the boy. 9 So Eli said to Samuel, "Go and lie down. If He calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down where he'd been.

10 Then the Lord came and stood there, calling just as before, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel said, "Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening."

When the prophet Samuel, way back in the Old Testament, was a boy, he was in the temple helping the priest Eli. God came and spoke to Samuel, calling His name. Eli figured out it was God who was speaking to Samuel, calling his name, and told Samuel, "Next time you hear the voice, answer, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'"

PP#12: Where Can We Go? You have the words of eternal life!

1. The words of life can be offensive
2. Jesus speaks words of life
3. Will you listen?

God speaks in Jesus words of life. They speak to things eternal and abundant. The words tell you who you are, and whose you are. God made you. God loves you. God chose you. God can restore you to His intention for you. There is nothing you have done or not done that can change that. God chooses you, right here, right now, just the way you are! He wants you! He likes you! He loves you! Jesus died for you! Will you listen to the words of life?

God will not leave you where you are now. He has a different future planned for you. Your past will not determine your future. No. In fact, His past—His death on the cross—will determine your future. He loves you as you are, but He loves you too much to leave you as you are. He plans to work on you, and to take away what He has already forgiven in you. It will not be easy, and you must join Him in this work, but God's image in you can be fully restored.

You belong to Him. You have meaning. God has a purpose for your life. You have work to do for Him. He has a calling on your life. He is calling your name. Will you listen?

PP#13: John 6:60-69 (CEB)

67 Jesus asked the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?"

68 Simon Peter answered, "Lord, where would we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are God's holy one."

We've been listening to how Peter responds to Jesus, hoping that we can make what *he* says to Jesus *our* response. The crowds are turning away, and Jesus turns to them and asks, "Do you also want to leave?"

Simon Peter speaks up. Here it is! Peter speaks from his longing heart. "Simon Peter answered, 'Lord, where would we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are God's holy one.'"

Difficult words, yes. They challenge our thinking and call us away from our self-centeredness. But we have tried so many other ways, different things to satisfy that longing within, that ache for abundant life. Where else can we go? Nothing satisfies! They're only temporary

diversions. Only you have the words of life! And we believe and know that you are God's salvation!
 "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening!"

PP#14: *Pix of me kneeling at the Asbury prayer railing at John Street UMC.*

I'm going to invite anyone who would like come down and spend some time at the prayer railing, kneeling or standing, to join me there. If you want someone to come and pray with you, simply put your hands out like this, and a member of the prayer team will come pray with you.

If you need to invite Jesus to speak His words into your life, open your heart to Him. Or perhaps you need Him to fill your mouth, so that you can speak words of life into your teen, or spouse, or friend, or coworker. Jesus also said that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." (Matt. 12:34) Pray for Jesus to come into your heart so that from your mouth you can speak words of life. God calls your name. Our response? "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening!"

Let's pray.

PP: Prayer at the Prayer Rail

Closing Song: *To God Be the Glory* - Sanctify

PP: Memory Verse

Memory Verse: "You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." -John 6:69

Announcements: Wed. M&M: Meal: Ham & potatoes, More: Small Groups & Board Games.
 Community Care pantry after worship.
 YPA shows.
 Small groups.
 Next Sunday: Women's Sunday. Reese preaching.

Benediction: -David