

Over the past few weeks we have been learning about 7 spiritual practices to help us in becoming better followers of God. The practices which we have already focused on are worship, prayer, study, fellowship with other Christians, and healthy living. That sermon on healthy living has already cost me as my son caught me eating an Oreo and reminded me that my body is a temple.

Next week Dot Killian will be here while I am away with my family looking at potential colleges for Mary Kathryn and Dot's message will be on the seventh spiritual practice of rest and Sabbath. Today we are going to focus on serving others.

Today it is appropriate to focus on serving others since we have in our midst 10 people who have traveled from other parts of the country to serve people in our community. And the relationship with the Habitat Caravaners has been such a blessing here. They have been working on doing some repair work in Gaston County for some long time Habitat homeowners.

But you may have also noticed that some work has been done around this church as well by them. You may have noticed some new paint on the directional signs and outside doors. You may have noticed the fixed ceiling outside this door over here. So our relationship with the Caravaners has been about serving and being served.

Today is Worldwide Communion Sunday when Christians around the world are invited to share in this sacrament. So Christians all over the world are sharing this sacrament. That includes our friends in Liberia, Lebanon, Mexico, Honduras, Chile, Russia, England, Germany, the Caribbean, and all over the United States and Canada.

Christians all around the world are brought together through this one shared sacrament. Whatever differences we have and whatever languages we speak are not as important as what we share in common and that is our common faith in Jesus Christ.

Since it is Worldwide Communion Sunday, I thought it would be important to hear what the Bible says about how we treat people that come into our midst from other cultures. If you turn on the television or read blogs or newspapers you hear a lot about what people in our culture say about people from other countries. But since we are here in worship I think it is important that we hear what the Bible says about this subject.

What I am going to do is allow the Bible to speak for itself. I am not going to interpret these many passages that I am about to read. I am going to read several short verses from the Old and New Testament and then I am going to end with words from Jesus.

Let us listen to what the Bible says about how we are to treat others in our midst who may be different than us.

(At this point I am reading several passages that speak to the way we treat the resident alien and stranger among us)

The last Scripture I am going to read is Matthew 25:31-46. In the gospel of Matthew, this is the last sermon that Jesus is recorded as giving prior to the events at the end of his life. So according to the gospel writer Matthew, Jesus' ministry leads up to these words which he shares with his closest followers.

Read Matthew 25:31-46

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-Given: October 5, 2014 in Allison Creek Presbyterian (York, SC)