

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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1 Corinthians 3:5-11

July 15, 2018

Picking favorites? That misses the point. God grows you on Jesus.

- #1 criteria for a church among churchgoing Americans: Preaching
 - ♦ Not necessarily style. But proclaims the Bible clearly to me.
 - ♦ Aaron Loy notes: *Do you leave church saying, "That preacher is good," or "God is good"?* - Loyal to the Preacher or loyal to Jesus?

Picking favorites? That misses the point.

- While at sem, heard a gifted Pastor. *Wow! How does he do that?* Envy
 - ♦ Later heard him tell how he would come home from Conference depressed comparing his ministry to that of brother pastors. Him?!
 - ♦ There's nothing wrong with appreciating a servant of God:
 - for his gifts, ability to connect with you in preaching or teaching
 - for the bond of pastor-parishioner over working together
 - ♦ Having a personal favorite is different than creating a divisive fan club
- ❖ The point: **We are nothing. God is everything!**
 - *neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.*
 - Central truths of our faith:
 - ♦ *I am the problem. God is the solution*
 - ♦ *I am nothing without God. But God makes me his eternal someone (child, heir, new creation) in Christ Jesus.*
 - A pastor who does not know this about himself is not fit to serve.
 - ♦ The Law message of our corruption and death (separated from God)
 - ♦ The Gospel message that God rescues us from this - making us alive
 - All gospel promises are based on and rooted in Jesus doing for us what we can't do: live a perfect life and pay for our wickedness
 - The gospel alone gives us the gift of Jesus' work by working faith in us
 - ♦ Pastors rely exclusively on this work of God in them and their people.
- ❖ The point: *only God, who makes things grow.*
 - *He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant — not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.* 2 Cor 3:6
 - ♦ The letter or Law - kills/convicts us we're dead and helpless on our own
 - ♦ The Spirit or Gospel - *is the power of God for salvation...* Rom 1:16

- ♦ ⁹ *Only servants — as the Lord has assigned to each his task.*
 - *Servants - diakonos* - one who attends to the needs of others
 - God's servants, meeting the needs of others God's way - the word
 - Churches that hire a pastor to address what they feel are their *needs* are religious institutions that address *itching ears*, not hurting souls. 2 Tim 4:3
- Servants who handle the word of God correctly
 - ♦ Law/Gospel - proclaim only God's word - not *I think, obviously...*
 - ♦ Calls for knowing the people to use the word to address where they are
 - ♦ Confident in the power of God's word to heal, give life, cause growth.

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- ❖ The point: *God grows you on Jesus.*
 - ⁹ *For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. ¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.*
 - ♦ God didn't bring you to life to just exist - but to be fruitful
 - ♦ It's not his mission that you just come to faith, but to grow & be built up
 - Reflect: How much have I grown in Christ in the last 1, 5, 10 years?
 - ♦ Paul switches from seed & field - to building and foundation
 - Jesus Christ is the source of your new life
 - God's goal: to make you new in Christ - build exclusively **on** Jesus.
 - To build **off** of Jesus - wasted, worthless, disastrous.
 - If you think you totally know Jesus, you know nothing. The more you use his building material - the word/the gospel - your eyes see eternity

A couple of years ago a younger pastor (not WELS) asked me how I keep coming up with material for sermons after more than 30 years. *Preach the text.*

- After 37 years of ministry - I've only scratched the surface for our growth
 - ♦ I long for each of you to grow every Sunday in worship
 - ♦ I long for each of you to grow in Scripture - together and individually
 - I love to hear: *Pastor, I was reading Scripture. have a question.....*

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He chooses to work this growth through Servants of the Word - men, humbled and honored to be called by Jesus - to be coworkers for your growth.