

TIME OF REFLECTION

“Each of us is a singular narrative, which is constructed, continually, unconsciously, by, through, and in us—through our perceptions, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions; and, not least, our discourse, our spoken narrations.”

~Oliver Sacks (1933-2015), famed British neurologist

“The reason why the theme of repentance is neglected, as indeed it is not only in modern secular society but in the church, is because it is a costly thing to repent. It does mean reshaping your life in quite a radical way. And people, just because they find it too costly of a prospect, ...try to devise a way of being ‘Christian’ which doesn’t involve anything...radical....”

~J.I. Packer (1926-2020), British-born theologian

“...insecure in our relationships and anxious about intimacy, we look to technology for ways to be in relationships and protect ourselves from them at the same time.”

~Sherry Turkle, professor of social science and technology at MIT

“The deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence.”

~Georg Simmel (1858-1918), German sociologist, philosopher, and critic

“Everybody makes excuses for themselves they wouldn’t be prepared to make for other people.”

~Rebecca Goldstein, *Plato at the Googleplex: Why Philosophy Won’t Go Away*

“Self-justification and judging others go together, as justification by grace and serving others go together.”

~Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), German pastor-theologian in *Life Together*

In ancient Rome, “Christianity seemed to have little chance.... Christianity’s success is to be found in its absolute inclusiveness. More than any other of its competitor religions it attracted all races and classes.... Christianity...gloried in its appeal to Jew, Gentile, African, and Barbarian.... There was no other religion that took in all groups and all strata of society.”

~Kenneth Scott Latourette (1884-1986), American historian at Yale University

“Our goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.”

~Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968), Baptist minister and civil rights leader

SERMON – “The Community Jesus Creates” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Romans 12:1-21 (NASB95)*

¹ Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

³ For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. ⁴ For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷ if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; ¹¹ not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹² rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³ contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. ¹⁷ Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹ Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰ “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.