

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 1/8/2024

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, January 9 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for teachers. Let their teaching be more than just communicating facts, but helping students to see life in new ways that will allow them to navigate the challenges and opportunities of life. Thank GOD for those who share their gifts that allow others to grow in both knowledge and understanding.*

There is a story of a six-year-old girl doing a project in an art class. Her painting is a profusion of colors, yet the subject of her work is not yet recognizable.

The teacher tactfully asks, "What are you painting?"

"This is a picture of GOD," the girl proudly tells the teacher.

"Well," the teacher gently explains, "you know that no one has ever seen GOD before."

The little beams as she replies, "They will when I get through!"

In John 14:9, JESUS says, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the FATHER." One of the reasons that GOD became human as JESUS was so that we might know the FATHER through the words and actions of JESUS. Reading the Gospels helps us to better understand who GOD is and how GOD feels about people. In a real sense, looking at who JESUS is in the Gospels allows us to see GOD.

A few years back, it was popular for Christians to say, "What would JESUS do?" I've mostly had a problem with that because it seems to suggest that we can do what JESUS would. Mostly, that's not possible. Rather, I think the question we should ask is, "What would JESUS have me do?" It challenges us to look at the needs that we might address in JESUS' name as we live in this world now. But when we face a dilemma about how to deal with someone who makes us feel uncomfortable, or who doesn't fit our image of what a believer should be, or who challenges the behaviors we've come to believe are "right," it's a good time to ask that question, "What would JESUS do?" How would JESUS relate to the person? What might JESUS do or say to this individual? Though we can't do all that JESUS would, we can still seek to follow HIS example as we consider how JESUS would treat the person who makes us uncomfortable.

Another saying I used to hear some time back is, "You might be the last Bible someone reads." That saying also troubled me in that I hoped that, while our words and actions might witness to our faith, this witness was not the last time someone turned to the Word of GOD. Rather, I hope that the witness of our lives might move others to begin a relationship with the LORD that would last a lifetime. I want to be the first Bible someone reads, leading them to faith in JESUS.

When you get to the end of this day, will you be able to say that your life was like that little girl's painting? Remember that where you walk, the choices you make may very well be the footprints that someone else follows. How we live will tell others what we believe about GOD and GOD's love for us. Live your life so that others will know what GOD looks like.

In CHRIST's love,
Pastor Jeffrey