

October 2020

Our JOYFUL Noise

The Monthly Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Britton SD
Pastor Donald Buck 605 551 9001 - Mindi Buck 605 551 9005
Church 605 448 2460



The Bucks' Blog



"Who Made You Judge and Jury?"

Presbyterians have a favorite phrase that comes from our theology: "Reformed and always reforming" Much of the time, what it really means is that we're arguing and

always arguing. Some things never change. Romans makes it clear that divisions in the church go back to the earliest churches. The church in Rome was full of arguing...let's call it what it is... judging. And Paul is saying, "Stop it. Just stop it." Stop judging your brother, and concentrate on examining yourself and your living of life.

The whole emphasis of the New Testament is on forgiveness of sins, reconciliation, and right living manifested and made possible by the love of God through the Cross of Jesus Christ."

An English proverb says, 'Faults are thick where love is thin'; but God demonstrates the opposite and to a greater extent: 'faults are thin where love is thick.'" Why do we judge others? especially within the church? I believe we have become a product of our society.

You see, as Christians, we've forgotten the exhortation from the Bible to "come out from among them and be separate."

We've worked so hard to be like everyone else that there is little difference from us and the unchurched. And we've assimilated our culture, which is...Exceptionalism, certainty, and an ego on steroids. We are just plain certain that we are right and everyone else is wrong.

Yet, have you stopped to consider, When we judge others we place our authority above God's. We are all only servants of God in God's household. We are to focus on God, not our supposed superiority to others. All our conduct must take its reference from our service to Jesus whose claim to lordship over all comes from his death and resurrection. One day, we will not have to justify to God the conduct of others, only our own conduct. How we have lived this life we were given.

Paul asks, "Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? We will all sit before the judgment seat of God."

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount sounds a similar theme: "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make, you will be judged and the measure you give, will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye when you have a log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye" (Matt. 7:1-5).

Rabbi Jeffrey Summit, Tufts University, tells this story...

The story is told of a monastery that had fallen upon hard times. Once it was a great monastic order, but with the rise of secularism in the 19th

century, all was lost and there were only 5 monks left in the decaying house: the Abbot and four others, all over seventy in age. Clearly the order was dying.

In the woods surrounding the monastery there was a little cabin that a rabbi from a nearby town occasionally used as a retreat. The old monks could always sense when the rabbi was visiting the cabin. "The rabbi is in the woods, the rabbi is in the woods again," they would whisper to each other.

As he agonized over the imminent death of his order, the abbot decided to visit the rabbi and ask for any advice that might save the monastery. The rabbi welcomed the abbot at his hut. But when the abbot explained the purpose of this visit, the rabbi could only commiserate with him.

"Yes. I know how it is," he exclaimed. "The spirit has gone out of the people. It is the same in my town.

Almost no one comes to the synagogue anymore." So the old abbot and the old rabbi wept together. Then they read parts of the Torah and quietly spoke of deep things. When the time came for the abbot to leave, they embraced one another. "It has been a wonderful thing that we have talked after all these years," the abbot said.

"But is there nothing you can tell me, no piece of advice you can give me that would help me save my dying order?"

"No, I am sorry," the rabbi responded, "I have no advice to give you." But then the rabbi paused and said quietly to the abbot, "But, there is one thing I have to tell you: One of you is the Messiah."

When the abbot returned to the monastery his fellow monks gathered around him and asked, "Well, what did the rabbi say?" "He couldn't

help," the abbot answered. "We just wept and read the Torah together. The only thing he did say, just as I was leaving—he said one of us was the Messiah! Maybe it's something from Jewish mysticism. I don't know what he meant."

In the days and weeks and months that followed, the old monks began to think about this and wondered whether the rabbi's words could actually be true? The Messiah is one of us? Could he possibly have meant one of us monks, here at the monastery? If that's the case, who is it? Do you suppose he meant the abbot? Yes, if he meant anyone he probably meant Father Abbot. He has been our leader for more than a generation. On the other hand, he might have meant that Brother Thomas is a holy man. Everyone knows that Thomas is a man of light. Certainly he couldn't have meant Brother Jonathan! Jonathan gets crotchety at times. But come to think of it, even though he is a thorn in people's sides, when you look back on it, Jonathan is virtually always right, often very right. Maybe the rabbi did mean Brother Jonathan, but surely not Brother Philip. Philip is so passive, a real nobody. But then almost mysteriously he has a gift for somehow always being there when you need him. He just magically appears by your side. Could Philip be the Messiah?

Of course, the rabbi didn't mean me. He couldn't possibly have meant me. I'm just an ordinary person. Yet supposing he did? Suppose I am the Messiah? Oh God, me? As they contemplated in this manner, the old monks began to treat each other with extraordinary respect on the off chance that one of them might actually be the Messiah. And on the off, off chance that each monk himself might be the Messiah, they began to treat themselves with extraordinary respect.

Because the monastery was situated in a beautiful forest, people occasionally came to visit the monastery to picnic on its tiny lawn, and

then to go into the dilapidated chapel to meditate. And as they did so, without even being conscious of it, they sensed this aura of extraordinary respect that now began to surround the five old monks and seemed to radiate out from them and permeate the atmosphere of the place. There was something strangely attractive, even compelling, about it. People began to come back to the monastery more frequently to picnic, to play, to pray. They began to bring their friends to show them this special place. And their friends brought their friends. Then it happened that some of the younger men who came to visit the monastery started to talk more and more with the old monks. After a while one asked if he could join them. Then another. And another.

And it happened that within a few years the monastery had once again become a thriving order and, thanks to the rabbi's gift, a vibrant center of light and spirit.

Rabbi Jeffrey draws this conclusion from the story: "How we judge and treat the people around us, on a simple day to day level, not only determines our relationship with them but the very quality of life in our community. Wherever that community is, our small worlds can be transformed when we look at another human being and understand: this person has merit and worth. There are things I can learn from this person. In the rabbinic tradition, one of the definitions of wisdom is: the person who is wise is the one who has the ability to learn something from every person. A wise person is able to really hear and appreciate that every individual can make a valuable contribution to our life, to our community.

Paul's message to the Romans is a gift to us. It is the gift of respect for others in the context of service to the One who is the

Lord of the dead and the living, the one before whom we will all stand one day, accountable for our own actions and inactions.

You see, we are all Christ Jesus, the Messiah in our world. "For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living" (Romans 14:9). "If we live, we live to the Lord. If we die, we die to the Lord. Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's" (14:8).

Why do we judge others? One day, each of us will stand before God to be judged for what we have done or not done with this life. And God will rightly ask us... Who made you judge and jury?

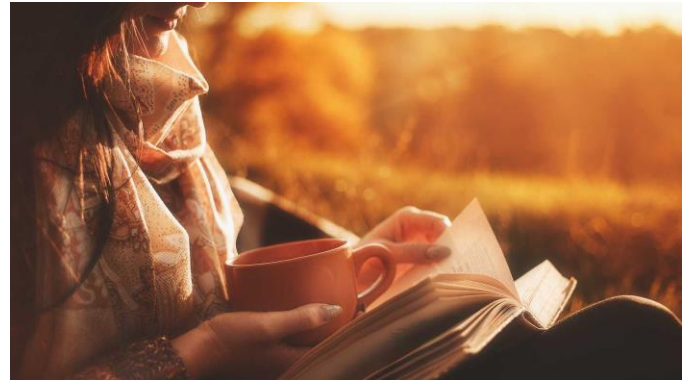
Rev. Donald & Mindi

October

Fight Fear with Faith in Jesus

Instead of focusing on the negative and unknown, train your mind to trust Jesus.

by **Tracy Eldridge** From **MORNINGS with JESUS** -
Posted on Sep 2, 2020



For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. 2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT)

Fear is a dream killer. Fear makes me think of all the negative outcomes that could happen if I do something out of my comfort zone: *Somebody might not like it. I don't know how to do it. People will talk about me. Or . . . it might not work.*

I weary myself listening to the naysaying in my head and talk myself out of trying to do anything new. Or if I start a project, fear keeps me from finishing it. Eventually I allow my dreams to be killed by fear. Lately as I have been studying the Scriptures, spending time with Jesus, and listening to my pastor's sermons, I am giving faith a try. I am fighting fear with faith in Jesus. Instead of focusing on the negative and unknown, I am trying to train my mind to simply trust Jesus. Last school year I took a faith step by asking to chair a school program. Putting the program together was not a smooth project. In my mind, all I could see was failure.

Nevertheless, I stayed committed because I didn't want to give up. Ultimately the program was a success, and the students did an amazing job.

Faith in Jesus Christ will give us power over fear. In Matthew 8:23–26, Jesus was asleep on the boat when the wind and the

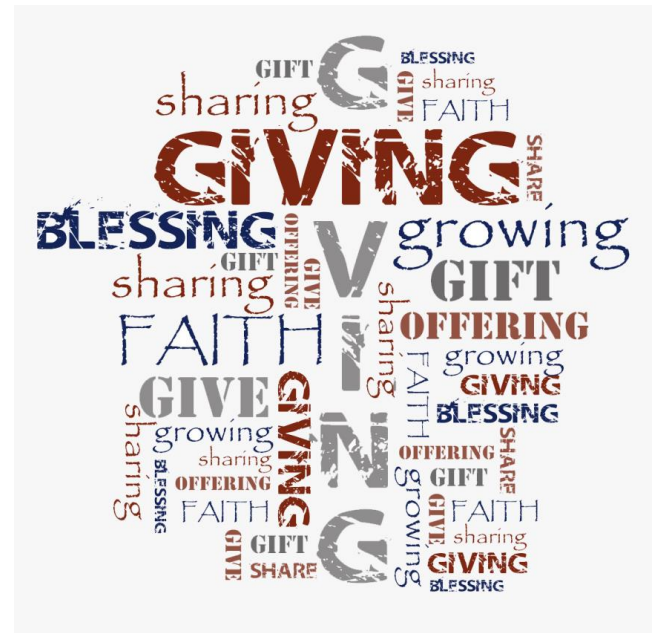
waves rocked the boat and frightened the disciples. They cried out to Jesus to save them, and He asked them why they feared, telling them they had little faith. Then He calmed the wind and waves. He can do the same for us. Jesus is right here with us, ready to calm our fears when we place our faith in Him.

FAITH STEP: Hebrews 12:2 (KJV) states that Jesus is "the author and finisher of our faith." If you have something on your heart you want to try, step out in faith, trust Jesus, and kill the fear.



Session Notes: 9-16-20

- Discussed starting Sunday school soon.
- Tentatively planning to start confirmation classes September 20 following worship service.
- Approved the baptism for Wyatt Hagen, son of Kendall and Ashley Hagen, on Saturday, September 19th, 2020.
- The next communion is October 4th, 2020.
- Work continues to bring worship services online.
- The sale of Camp Pioneer will be Monday, October 5th, 2020.
- The next session meeting is Wednesday, October 21st, 2020 at 7:00 pm.



Please remember that the church is counting on your gifts, pledges and assistance during these trying times. So, as you are able, please forward your gifts to:

PO Box 127, Britton, SD 57430.

You may also give your gifts by going to our web site and hitting the giving button which will take you to the site for setting up your profile to make a secure one-time gift or a repeating gift through the Presbyterian Foundation to First Presbyterian Church, Britton.

That's at fpcbritton.com.



*The Nine Key Teachings
Of Jesus:
Radical Love
Lavish Generosity
Extravagant Forgiveness
Inclusive Hospitality
Compassionate Action
Selfless Service
A passion for Justice
Creative Nonviolence
Simple Living
--Kurt Struckmeyer*

Hagen Baby Boy Baptized



Wyatt Meryl Hagen, son of Ashley and Kendall Hagen, was baptized here in our church on Saturday, September 19th, by Rev. Buck. A family luncheon was held following the baptism in the fellowship hall.

Sunday School is back in session every Sunday following worship service.



Youth Group will now start meeting every Wednesday at 6:30 P.M.

Confirmants are meeting on Sunday following worship service at this time.



First Presbyterian Church
804 5th Street, Box 127, Phone: 605 448 2460
Pastor Donald Buck 605 551 9001
Mindi Buck 605 551 9005
fpcbritton.com

Pastoral Appointments
Monday thru Thursday
10:00 – 4:00