

Sunday, January 12, 2020

Psalm 139

I Corinthians 6:12-19 9:24-27

Matthew 10:34-39

The New You Physically

The new year is progressing and what has occurred in this last week? The Golden Globes best picture director is for the movie 1917 (based on WWI), an Iranian airplane crashed with 57 Canadians including 5 who called Windsor home, the rainstorm that was to leave a lot of water in our ditches shifted and turned in a different direction, and teachers are striking and working but wanting changes, and this city is in mourning as many people have died under different circumstances (if you read the obituaries in the Windsor Star). Yet there is something that calls us together this morning; something that spoke to your heart today and said I need to be with my church family and to worship God. Maybe it is the fact that for the next few weeks our sermon series will focus on 2 Corinthians 5:17 "Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone a new life has begun." And particularly what this means as we seek to be a new person in Jesus Christ as we begin 2020 and be renewed in our understanding as an individual which is spiritual, physical, emotional, financial and relational.

Last week we began by reflecting upon what it means to be a new person spiritually- that is how we must take responsibility for our spiritual health and growing in relationship with God. Our focus today is how God cares about your bodies- your physical selves and what we do with them really matters. Our reading from Psalm 139, in which we shared the refrain, "God you have searched me, you know me through and through" is a favourite psalm because there are times when we might wonder where God is when facing tough situations affecting our physical health, facing the changes aging brings or when accidents or disease hinders living life as was first intended. We might wonder why people have body pain, or experience changes in their physical selves. Yet God knows you for who you are in years gone by, now, and in the time ahead. God made you so intentionally, so carefully so thoughtfully that it is important to realize that what we do with our physical body matters. God knows what is absolutely the best for our body we just need to experience and understand theological truths about who we are physically.

First, we were created by God and for God. Genesis 1:27 states we are created in God's image and so there is something about our physical bodies that reflects who God is and how you bring honour and glory to him. "God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth including our bodies. He made the things we can see and the things we cannot see." Colossians 1:16.

Secondly, our physical body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Thinking about body and spirit- this is primarily how we identify ourselves. What our physical attributes help to identify who we are—tall, short, colour of skin, long or short or no hair and then the spiritual portion- identifies our characteristics or personality. But in our Christian understanding, we ask God's Spirit to enter our life and something amazing happens. God's Spirit moves in and God directs your life- your coming and going.-either consciously or unconsciously. This is what we read from I Corinthians 6. "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Spirit who lives in you and was given to you by God. You do not belong to yourself for God bought you with a high price. So you must honour God with your body." We belong to God and because of this we need to honour God with our bodies. It makes a difference of what and how God can use you. God loans these bodies we have for up to how many years and it is a good idea to take care of them- as we need them!

The third truth about our bodies is that God does bless you if you take care of them. God blesses you with health, energy, endurance. Just think of this- you wake up and you feel rested, energized, what you eat fuels you for the next few hours and then you can do anything. But it is up to us to do something about keeping our bodies healthy.

Christmas and New Year's holidays are over- what did you do during that time? You probably made, ate and enjoyed rich foods, sweets and wonderful family gatherings where everyone's favourites were put on tables to eat. There was no shortage of food. And so we all had just a little taste. Well it is Jan 12 and the little taste of everything adds up—I know. Maybe what we need to do is a little bit of stretching and exercising—eating more root vegetables and drinking water. The idea is to choose to live a healthy and maybe get back to your good routines of exercising, walking and eating good food that fuels you properly. I know that this is what I need to do- get back to routine or even make changes to truly honour God with our bodies in 2020.

As we have been given this gift of life and the gift of the body for our spirit to live in – it is time to make changes for what is around us. In our house we have a junk food box. This is where we put well junk food- chocolate, candy, granola bars, marshmallows. etc. It is usually out of sight and what is out of sight makes it easy not to want or be tempted by to eat it. The problem right now is that this box is not big enough for the wonderful treats we all like to eat. So what I have done is hide it in other places. My hope is that I don't forget about them and they are no good. I will eat a little bit. But there is the temptation to eat all those sweets before Valentine's Day!

What hinders us to care for our bodies are two things-temptations and discipline. What temptations are you facing when it comes to your physical self? It might not be giving into sweets, or not exercising enough, or sitting too long. Maybe there are other things that tempt you- staying up late, not sleeping enough, or other temptations which affect your body with addictions of all different kinds. What are we to do? We might have to walk away from those things that tempt us and seek help if needed.

How do we discipline ourselves to do what is best. There are some foods that I know are good for you- like broccoli and kale. I just cannot bring myself to eat these. I don't buy kale but I do buy broccoli—it does taste much better with a cheese sauce on it, but that kind of defeats the goodness of the vegetable! Disciplining ourselves to eat heart healthy foods is also a good part of building up a new you physically. Heart healthy foods are low in cholesterol like Cheerios and to choose food that fuels you well is very important. Paul states “I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should otherwise I fear that after preaching I myself might be disqualified.” There are many ways of disciplining your body and only you know what you need to do to set new goals for yourself—maybe it is to sleep better, exercise or stretch more regularly, drink more water. Or maybe you need to deal with stress and you can do this with merely taking a walk- even around your home, yard, or wherever it is safe to do so.

One thing I do is drink water. I carry this water bottle around a lot-especially when it is hot. But I am finding that if I drink water I feel better and my digestive system works better. Not only is drinking more water good for you, it makes you less hungry, it makes you less likely to snack on things that are not good for you. But only you can decide how to discipline your body.

God made us unique individuals who are body and spirit. We have chosen to follow God—he dwells in us. But are we really willing to physically live for God? In Matthew 10 Jesus states, “If you cling to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me you will find it.” Paul writes “I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all God has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice that is acceptable to God. There are many people who behave indifferently about their bodies but if we let God transform us into a new person by changing the way we think we will learn God's will for us and live according to his way. Are you willing to do this? To find the New you from within yourself- spiritually and physically? It means to take action, to remove ourselves from temptation and to enter into a way of discipline. And it is worth it why? Because you are a new person and God is still working on you so that can be and become the best person. But we must care for our whole beings and to come to a new understanding of who we are in Christ Jesus.

As we begin 2020 we seek Jesus as we renew our faith and to guide and show us how to live. As we share in what he asked us to do- give thanks, eat and drink; and remember God's Spirit will be present within us and moving amongst us. We will eat the bread and taste the cup and through this act-which combines the physical nourishment, we in turn are spiritually fed. You have been forgiven of your sin, now it is time to share in what Jesus asked us to do- let us come and share the Lord as the forgiven new creation we are and will become. Amen.

Let our prayer- be the words we sing together—Open my eyes