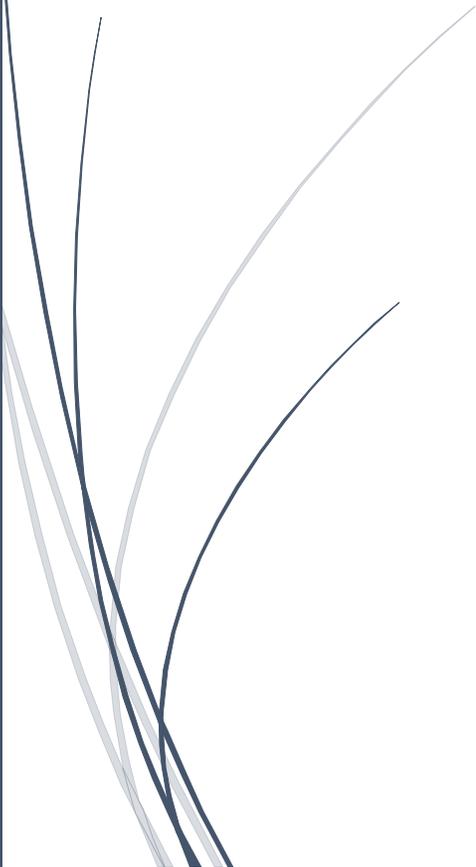


5/17/2015

The Music of Grace

Music Sunday



CCUMC
PASTOR BRAD

Early in the book of John -- 1:14-16 -- we read these words:

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

"From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace." During a British conference on comparative religions, experts from around the world debated what, if any, belief was unique to the Christian faith. The debate went on for some time until C. S. Lewis wandered into the room. "What's the rumpus all about?" He asked, and heard in reply that his colleagues were discussing Christianity's unique contribution among world religions. Lewis responded, "Oh, that's easy. It's grace."

In his first letter to the Corinthians 1:4-5, the apostle Paul writes, "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind..."

Beloved in Christ – Grace!! The UNEARNED, unmerited love of God for humanity – for you and for me! "and there's nothing you can do about it!" -- We are called to be a people of Grace -- A people filled to the brim with grace, and overflowing with the joy of the Lord.

Sadly, so many -- even those who call themselves followers of Christ -- seem to have lost their first love. They have lost or misplaced the spiritual joy of the Lord. And as we know, the joy of the Lord is our strength. And the joy of the Lord, in a way – since we're all about music today – the joy of the Lord is the music of Grace... and the music of Faith.

Author Max Lucado talks about grace and hearing the music of faith: Imagine that you want to learn to dance. So, being the rational, cerebral person that you are, you go to the bookstore or the library and you get a book -- on dancing. You take the book home and get to work. Finally, you think you have got it. So you invite your wife/husband/partner to come in and watch.

You hold the book open, and you follow the instructions, step. by. step. You even read the words out loud -- So they'll know that you have done your homework: "Lean with your right shoulder," and so you lean.

"Now step with your right foot," you step. "Turn slowly to the left," so you turn. You continue to read... then dance. Read... then dance. Until finally the dance is finished, and you plop down on the couch, exhausted. You look at your partner, and proclaim, "There! I executed it perfectly."

"You executed it, all right," she sighs. "You killed it."

"Say what?!?"

"You forgot the most important part. (Slow) Where is the music?"

You never thought about music. You remembered the book. You learned the rules. You laid out the pattern. But you forgot the music.

"Do it again," she says putting in a CD. "This time don't worry about the steps; just follow the music." She extends her hand and the music begins. The next thing you know, you're dancing -- and you don't even have the book. (Pause)

We as Christians are prone to follow the book while we ignore the music. We master the doctrine; we outline the chapters, we memorize important passages, we debate the rules, and stiffly we step out onto the dance floor of life... with no music. We have no music in our hearts.

We measure each step, regulate each turn, and flop into bed each night -- exhausted from another day, of dancing by the book.

We have to give ourselves over to God. Let God love you. Allow the Grace of God to saturate your very being. And don't be surprised, then, when your heart begins to hear music -- music that you have never heard -- and your feet begin to dance like never before.

Keep your eyes on Jesus Christand you'll hear the music of the Holy Spirit and you'll dance a life of grace.

And Beloved..... You will dance like you have never danced before.

Amen.