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Daily Devotion



DOING THE HARD THING

I will always remember the first time I saw it. On a chilly fall morning I walked toward the front door of Immanuel Lutheran Church and there he was. A fine young man named Caleb was sitting on the cold cement slab in front of the door to hold it open for those of us who were coming to worship. The rest of his family had already entered the church, but Caleb continued to sit there to hold the door wide open. He was definitely chilly, but he proudly stayed in his position. He had found a way to serve and he was not about to leave his post! In addition to sitting in front of the door to hold it open, he joyfully greeted everyone as they entered. This was not a one time event. He faithfully did this for several weeks. While some might think this was an easy enough job for Caleb, I'm certain it was not. Caleb is a healthy, very active young man. He likes to move! Without a doubt he would always prefer moving to sitting and yet there he SAT, in service to his Lord. Love makes it possible for us to do those hard things that we would prefer not to do. This past Sunday I attended second service at Immanuel. One of our senior saints, with her walker close beside her, sat just ahead of me. Understandably, she respectfully remained seated during the service with one exception. When the Gospel was read, she used the pew in front of her to painfully pull herself up out of respect for the Gospel. It was the only time she stood in the entire service. I have asked both this young brother and slightly senior sister to share these observations. Both of them, in their own way, preached a powerful sermon simply by their actions. They both chose to do the hard thing out of love for their Savior. They both know well that Jesus did the hardest thing for them. Both of them experienced discomfort and pain to show their love and respect for Jesus, but neither of them were mistreated by others. The pain they felt was minimal compared to the pain Jesus faced on the cross for them. When I saw Caleb at his post, I immediately thought about Psalm 84:10, "For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness." Far too many kids (and adults) spend Sunday morning cuddled in a blanket and comfy pajamas, watching some extra TV or playing a favorite video game. Caleb chose to serve, to hold open the door. I believe God expects all of us to do what might be a bit uncomfortable to be a doorkeeper, a door opener in the house of our Lord so that others will feel loved and welcomed there. God's Holy Word is read and explained in His house. God has promised us His Word will not return void. We need to be there to hear and to joyfully open the door for others to do the same. As I thought about my beloved senior sister, I reflected on the words of various verses of Psalm 26. "For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in your faithfulness...O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells...But as for me, I shall walk in integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me. My foot stands on level ground; in the great assembly I will bless the Lord. There will come a time when Caleb will best serve his Lord in other ways—perhaps as an usher or an elder. There will likely come a time when those who find it difficult to stand will not be able to stand or perhaps even sit up. God will always provide a way for us to serve Him by helping others. I thank God almost daily for a member of our congregation who calls people on their birthday to let them know they are not forgotten. How blessed we are by those people who pray for us even if we do not know they are praying for us. We have no idea how, when or where God will use us, we simply know He will. He promised us this in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."