

7/3 Independence Day weekend -- Communion Sunday

Color: green

Scripture: Galatians 5:1, 13-15

Title: *No Going Back*

Topic: This weekend we celebrate our political freedom. But the dichotomy of slavery and political freedom is but a metaphor for our soul-freedom from sin and from its slavery. Just as the Israelites in the Bible wanted to return to captivity, we sometimes want to return to the easy ways of sin-captivity. Freedom requires work and responsibility....

7/10

Color: green

Scripture: Acts 3:1-11

Title: *Agents of Redemption*

Topic: Peter and John tell the beggar, "Silver and Gold I have not but what I have, I give to you...." Peter and John became agents of redemption that day in the temple courts. I believe that redemption happens when we freely give what has been poured into each of us. What do we have to give? Sometimes it is silver and gold. But sometimes, when we encounter just the right person, it is so much more....

7/17

Color: green

Scripture: Luke 10:38-42

Title: *Not Fair*

Topic: Does life ever seem unfair? Are we ever victims of this cruel life? Instead of complaining to the Lord, be grateful for this precious gift of life. Here in America, it seems that we live in culture of victimhood, and it will seem that there is no way to be grateful. This is not a sermon about "just turning that frown upside down." This is about pouring out our hearts to God and then being set straight—empowered and redirected....

7/24

Color: green

Scripture: Philippians 3:12-14

Title: *Hold Fast; Press On*

Topic: Paul first describes a righteousness that is fragile and fleeting—that of the Law.... He then speaks of holding fast to the righteousness that is by faith.... Press on, brothers and sisters—press on!

7/31

Color: green

Scripture: Luke 12:13-21

Title: *Rich Toward God*

Topic: Wow! This one is pretty hard for someone looking toward retirement.... We may be familiar with this "parable of the rich fool," but instead of spending a lot of time condemning him and his actions, perhaps we can use this parable to help us understand what it is to be "rich toward God." Jesus shares examples in the verses that follow this parable.

8/7 Communion Sunday

Color: white

Scripture: Luke 12:35-40

Title: *Ready for Jesus*

Topic: Jesus told a parable warning people to be ready for his arrival. This could be taken a couple of ways. Was he speaking to the listeners about his own presence among them at that time, or is there something for us here? What does it take to be ready for Jesus? Certainly it is not about being perfect. I think it means to be looking for him and longing for him.

8/14 Back to School Sunday

Color: green

Scripture: Exodus 6:1-9

Title: *Teachers*

Topic: We will honor and bless the teachers, students, and all school workers.

8/21

Color: green

Scripture: Luke 13:10-17

Title: *Blue Law*

Topic: The Pharisees had created boundaries around the Sabbath to keep anyone from violating the Sabbath requirement for holiness. I recall when stores had blue ribbons that marked off parts of the store that were off limits during the sabbath. What is special about the Sabbath? Is it Saturday or is it Sunday? Jesus astounded his opponents by teaching that the Sabbath was made for us, and not us for the Sabbath. I believe it is a day for refreshing and renewing the body, mind, and especially the soul. The Pharisees were zealous in their efforts to keep it holy, but they got it wrong. Perhaps if we are focusing only on ourselves, we also get it wrong.

8/28

Color: green

Scripture: Luke 14:1, 7-14

Sermon: *The Best Seat*

Topic: In this well-known story, Jesus gives rules for guests and for hosts.... How does this apply to our life together? How might it inform our ministries?

9/4 Labor Day Weekend, Communion Sunday

Color: white

Scripture: Matthew 20:8-16

Title: *A Day's Labor*

Topic: The vineyard is the Kingdom of God. We've spent our entire life here, whether we are aware of it or not. It is only after the owner of the vineyard has seen us just standing around and hired us that we have been worthy of getting paid. What wages might we expect? Paul writes that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God in Jesus is eternal life (Romans 6:23). Topic: evangelism.

9/11

Color: green

Scripture: Luke 16:1-13

Title: *A Difficult Passage*

Topic: When the necessity for security clashes with the need to be generous, what happens? We are the "children of light" Jesus mentions. Are we holding onto the Master's wealth as though it were our own—good stewards. Or are we using it scandalously and gaining security in heaven?

9/18

Color: green

Scripture: 1Timothy 1:12-17

Title: *Setting an Example*

Topic: Paul writes that his life has been an example to the world of God's mercy. OK, that seems like Paul is a little bit "full of himself," but by this time in his ministry he has reason to be. It seems that these days, with social media, that we think we are to be examples to the world, or at least we want to be. If God were to use us as an example, what would it be? I think that for each of us it is different, but always points toward God, no matter how hard it might be to see it.... Topic: Living right

9/25

Color: green

Scripture: James 5:13-20

Title: *Powerful Prayer*

Topic: What do we make of this scripture? It seems so clear, yet it defies the reality we have seen.... I'm not sure how I'll preach it, but it challenges me so I think I need to wrestle with it. Topic: prayer