

Pastor Roy's sermon from May 17, 2015

Everyone has a purpose, a message to their life. Same is true for organizations, like the church, farm women, or farmer's fair, or Kiwanis. What is our message? What is our purpose? What is the point of our lives? Who are we as a church and parish? What is our mission?

Of course, this is what we will be talking about after the potluck this afternoon! We can also ask, "What is the ultimate meaning at work in the universe?" The principle which orders every life and every detail of this world?

What do people live for? (Answers) What purpose and meaning do you find in life? What is our purpose in the church? (Answers?)

All of our lessons this morning point to the message of the Gospel and the concern of the early leaders to pass that message on. In Acts, the apostles are concerned that there be 12 witnesses to the resurrection. The resurrection is vital to the message of the church. New life in faithfulness to God's mercy. A peace based on a life beyond our own. That given by God. A life sustained by God even beyond our bodies. This is about profound faith that God is at work in the world and in our relationships, in our churches and communities—and it begins with resurrection. We are nothing without this resurrection into new and renewed life. Think about it.

I John speaks of the testimony of God about Jesus—that he is the Son of God and that those who follow him have life—sustaining, enduring life. He doesn't mention resurrection, but it is the essence of Jesus' long prayer in the Gospel of John. In that prayer Jesus entrusts his followers and the message of divine love into God's care. This is resurrection. Trust, Hope—that God holds all of life and all meaning in mercy. This message is one of great freedom and peace. It is also the source of our mission. We sent to share this message of hope. Not to convince people that our way is the right way, that they are wrong, but to invite individuals and organizations to live in the freedom of trust, hope, and mercy. In the freedom of love. In the freedom of life which never dies. Life held by a merciful God.

Let us carry on the message of the faith. It's not about our individual identities as people or churches, it's about a trust which allows us to love, to forgive, to hope in that which is often hidden. This is our faith.

We gather to practice this faith, to learn this faith from each other. You are my teachers as I preach and teach. We are a living lesson in love. Jesus says, "As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." This is the opportunity of our lives.

Let us continue to proclaim this message of hope. Let us continue to love one another. For love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.