

OUTWARD EXPRESSIONS OF HIS LOVE

Friday, March 16, 2018, 27th Day of Lent

Romans 8:8-11 (CEB) “People who are self-centered aren’t able to please God. But you aren’t self-centered. Instead you are in the Spirit, if in fact God’s Spirit lives in you. If anyone doesn’t have the Spirit of Christ, they don’t belong to him. If Christ is in you, the Spirit is your life because of God’s righteousness, but the body is dead because of sin. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your human bodies also, through his Spirit that lives in you.”

At the end of chapter 7 of the book of Romans, Paul expresses an internal struggle he has been facing for a bit of time. The opening of chapter 8 is a refreshing change to hear of the everlasting life we, as Christians, hold in Christ. The season of Lent is a time for us to take time to rid ourselves of something that is a distraction in our lives. During this time, we are able to reflect on ourselves and see if we are self-centered or if our focus is on others and relationships with Christ. In order to truly be able to belong to God and be pleasing to Him, we must allow the Spirit to move within us.

One of the best ways to avoid this self-centered attitude is to show outward expressions of His love and generosity. One of the most humbling books I’ve ever read is “Not a Fan” written by Kyle Idleman, a Teaching Pastor at Southeast Christian Church in Kentucky. In this book, Idleman discusses all the different ways people can become a follower and disciple of Christ and not just a fan. A couple years ago during Lent, I decided to give up being just a fan of Jesus. I wanted to become a genuine lover and disciple of Christ. This journey showed me how to open myself up to other people and watch and walk with them on their journeys to discipleship. When we open up and allow people to walk with us and support us, any self-centered thoughts or feelings are no longer present.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we are thankful to be able to live within you and to proclaim your word to others so that they may know you too. We ask that you help us to open up and be genuine with ourselves so that we can bring people closer to you. Help us control our self-centered ways and allow your Spirit to move within us. In Your name we pray, Amen.

Grace, peace, and blessings,

Lauren Shanholtzer, St. Paul’s UMC, Nitro

lauren.shanholtzer@gmail.com