

Sidekicks of Scripture: Timothy 4/29/18

This morning, we continue our sermon series is entitled *The Sidekicks of Scripture*. In these sermons, we are taking a closer look at those Biblical men and women who often times played “second fiddle” to the main character of the story.... In this, it is my hope that we will discover just as much wisdom about how to live (and what mistakes to avoid) from these sidekicks as we do from the “stars of the show.”

We began the series by taking a closer look at Jesus’ disciple, Thomas....and while most of Christianity remembers and identifies Thomas with doubt...we discovered that he was also brutally honest and even in his doubt, chose to put his life on the line to stay together in community with the other disciples.

Next, we took a closer look at an early Christian leader, Barnabas....a man who doesn’t get a lot of notoriety in the Bible, yet nonetheless, was one of the key figures whose actions allowed Christianity to flourish in the world because he was the one who vouched for Saul...a former-persecutor of Christians who experienced the resurrected Jesus on the road to Damascus.

And last week, we learned that Moses father-in-law, Jethro provided some much needed advice about the importance of not trying to do everything yourself...but instead, sharing the responsibilities of life with others in order to avoid burning out and cultivate new leaders.

Today, in honor of our scholarship recipients, I thought I would lift up one of the youngest leaders in the early church....The Apostle Paul’s sidekick Timothy.

Now, the Bible mentions that Paul had a lot of sidekicks... however, the interesting thing about Timothy is that we are given more information about his life and background, than almost any other of the early Christian church leaders in the New Testament.

So to begin, I'd like to share some of the things we know about Timothy....

First off, we are told that from an early age, that Timothy put his faith in the Lord. And we are told that this was because of the way that he was raised. The Bible says that Timothy saw this sincere trust in God first modeled by his grandmother, Lois who in turn, imparted that faith to her daughter, Eunice, who then passed it on to Timothy.

We know that Timothy came from a mixed racial background, his mother was Jewish and his father was a Greek Gentile. And we know that Paul thought that this was one of Timothy's greatest strengths. That because he was able to understand both Jewish culture and gentile culture that he was a huge asset to the Church....and could be a bridge between two different communities.

We are told that Paul was impressed by several character qualities in Timothy. This included his knowledge of Judaism and the Hebrew Scripture and Timothy's reputation as a devout Christian. So in other words, Timothy was not only a good student in the classroom...but he conducted himself quite well out of the classroom as well.

We know that Timothy was willing to leave his hometown and go out into the world to both learn and teach others. He was a faithful who joined Paul and Silas and journeyed across the Roman Empire instructing the churches and teaching people about the love of Christ.

And of course, as we learn in today's scripture passage...which comes from a letter to Timothy from Paul....that Timothy is put into a leadership position within the church even though is he much younger than most of the people in the church...

And that is something that I really admire and think is worth holding up. Often times, it can be easy for any country, community or organization (including the church) to overlook the leadership and teachings of our young adults.... yet they have been providing valuable insight for us since the beginning of Christianity.

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the scholarship recipients here with us today have just as much that they could teach us, as we older adults could ever teach them.

In fact, I have a challenge for both our scholars and the rest of the congregation.

Scholars: I want you to think about one of the greatest pieces of wisdom you have gained during your time in high school. This could be something you learned in the classroom...or it could be something you learned playing sports, or in your musical training or just something you learned hanging out with your friends.

And congregation members, during our fellowship time, I encourage you to ask any scholar that you meet to tell you their piece of wisdom...and I have a feeling that we will learn quite a bit from one another...

In reflecting on what small piece of wisdom I wanted to share with our scholars this special Sunday...I could think of nothing better than sharing the 3 simple rules of our Church.

For those of you who might not know the History of Church of the Wayfarer, this congregation was founded in 1904 by a group of Christians who called themselves Methodists. Methodists got their name back in the 1700s because of the Methodical way they lived out their faith through reading scripture and caring for one another.

These first "Methodists" tried to systematically serve God every hour of the day.

The members set aside time for praying, examining their spiritual lives, studying the Bible, and meeting together. In addition, they took food to poor families, visited lonely people in prison, and taught orphans how to read. Members of the organization celebrated Holy Communion frequently and fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays until 3 pm.

And one of the coolest things about the Methodist Movement, was that it was made up of college students....at Oxford University in England.

And the man who first organized these college students was named John Wesley... and by looking at all of his sermons and writing, scholars have determined that Wesley believed that the Christian faith could be lived out by following 3 simple rules.

#1---Do No Harm: This is the first thing we should strive for. Soon to be college students....you will find that when thinking about what can get you ahead in life...there will be temptations to take shortcuts...temptation to keep someone else down in order to prop yourself up. And to be clear, there is nothing wrong with working hard to get ahead.....But it is my hope that in propelling yourself to the top, that you remember to also Do No Harm on your journey to success.

#2---Do Good: This is the rule that I believe from reading these scholars applications have really exemplified very highly.

Through their community service, fundraisers for various causes at school, helping their friends and teammates- each high school senior here has experienced the importance of doing good in the world.

However, I have to say that from my own experience, as pressures get even greater in adulthood, you may find yourself changing your

priorities. So, I strongly encourage you to not let the acts of kindness and good that you do fall to the back burner. Make them a priority.

If you can't do good in the world then the whole point of being a person of faith is missed. Jesus constantly called the disciples to action. Our Christian faith is not meant to be lived out in isolation...it is not meant to be a mere academic exercise...Bible Study and worship are very important...but we cannot forget to be Christ's hands and feet for good in the world.

Finally, Rule #3---Stay in Love with God. The traditional way this was stated was attend to the ordinances of God. This is where worship, communion, prayer and the study of scripture come in.

And I believe this can be the hardest one for college students and young adults to remember. It can be hard to make these things a priority. But I assure you, that they will be such a blessing to your life if you make the time for them. Your college campuses will be full of faith-based clubs and organizations and I encourage you to check them out.

The experience you have had with your churches and your youth groups does not need to end when you graduate high school....you do not need to take a 4 year break from the church. And I assure you, that if you make set aside some of your busy college schedules to attend worship, you wont regret it.

Do No Harm

Do Good

Stay In Love With God

Those are the simple words of wisdom I have for our scholars today.

And also, I want to let all of you know that when you are back in town for break---please do not hesitate to stop by and visit us....worship with us....share with us all the adventures you are having. Share with us the wisdom you are learning.

Each scholarship recipient here is part of the Wayfarer Family...or as many of us like to call it, the Wayfarer Nation..... and we love you as brothers and sisters in Christ and we want to remind you that God loves you as often as we can.

My prayer for you soon-to-be-college students is that like Timothy, each of you can use your unique experiences and backgrounds to shape not only younger generations.....but older generations as well.

I pray that your voices are heard....that your concerns and payed attention to...and that your God-given wisdom is taken seriously.

May you know you always have a group of people here who are praying for you...who are rooting for you...and who can't wait to see how you transform the world into a better place.

Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

Amen and Amen.