

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Fred Weimert "More than a Barn"

August 1, 2010

Judy and my daughter, Emily,
has taken up competing in races...
5K,
10K,
½ marathons,
even a ½ triathlon.

She participates in these events
with some of her friends
from the Otterbein Swim club...

And I am glad that she is taking part in these competitions.
It is good for her to get the exercise, running, biking, swimming,
and it is good for her to be involved in activities
with other people.

But I have to admit,
that having been a long distance runner in college,
I am a little shocked when I talk with Em...
about her work-out schedule.

I will ask her when her next race is coming up...
and she will say:

*"Oh, next Sunday.
It's a 10K race."*

And I will say:
"Good when did you run last?"

And she will reply:
*"I haven't run since a week ago Friday,
but I think I will be able to get a few miles in
next Wednesday."*

And I will say to her:
*"Are you crazy... you are so cavalier...
If I had missed a day of practice
in a week... or two... or three...
before a race,
I would have felt myself to be hopelessly out of shape...
Totally unprepared to compete!"*

And Emily will tell me:
"Calm down old man,

*You're starting to obsess...
I just do this for fun."*

And every time Emily takes a fun run...
she gets something...
a tee shirt (even those fancy wicking ones),
a medal,
some sort of trophy.

I am in my college's hall of fame for my running,
and all I have to show for it
are a couple of medals about the size of a quarter,
and some tiny track shoes,
that look like they came off a charm bracelet.

Emily has these huge hulking medals...
and drawers full of tee shirts
There is something wrong here.
It makes me want to shout...
Hey, you idiots...
You aren't running...
Jogging isn't running.

I am finally beginning to understand
those eruptions I have told you my father use to have
on the driving range.
When we had just watched a young person
hit a bucket of balls,
most of which never made it to the 100 yard marker.
And when this individual's friends came by and asked
are you ready to go.
and the young person would respond...
"Sure, I'm ready."

Then my father would shout out
*"You're not ready to go...
You are not going to be ready to go for at least a year or two.
Go take a lesson.
I have the name and numbers
of two or three pros
who could really help you...
Your game is sick...
You need help...
You need intensive care."*

Some times my father
needed to be physically restrained, by me.

And I understood it,
 because he loved golf,
 and hated to see people play badly.

Now I can live with people who play golf badly,
 even though slow play does bother me too much...
 I can survive it.

And I can live with people
 who jog instead of running.

And I really don't mind
 people getting awards for less than mediocre performances.
 I am just happy people
 are getting a little exercise...
 running,
 walking...
 It is all good.

But there is one thing that absolutely drives me nuts...
 and I hear it all the time,
 because I am in the religion business...
 a business I believe is very important.

What I hate is when someone tell me
 or someone else...
 maybe Opra,
 or Ellen...
 or someone on e-news.

When asked about their religious faith
 They respond:

"I am spiritual, but not really religious."

I want to say...

*"Oh, your like schizophrenic,
 you hear voices..."*

but you don't really listen...

or act on the instructions...

Is that it?

Because if it is

you should be on medication!"

I hear that all the time now,
 and it really makes me sick,
 because I believe
 that faith and faithfulness
 go hand in hand.

In the book I quoted to you last week

Here If You Need Me

Kate Braestrup, the author,
 who is a chaplain
 for the game wardens of the state of Maine,
 wrote about her husband Drew,
 a State Trooper,
 who had been killed in a traffic accident,
 but who had always hoped to attend Seminary...
 It was because of Drew's Unitarian faith
 that Kate
 had gone to seminary herself.

But as she wrote of Drew she said this:

*'New acquaintances,
 on discovering what line of work I'm in,
 will generally explain a lack of interest in church
 by announcing,
 "I'm spiritual,
 but I'm not really religious."*

*Trooper Drew Griffith was spiritual,
 which is to say
 that he had experiences of the numinous
 that were both spontaneous
 and deliberately cultivated.
 He engaged in regular,
 deliberate practice within a chosen community
 in order to nurture his own spiritual development
 and to translate
 it into useful,
 loving social action.
 Drew was religious.* Pg. 51

To claim to be a Christian – but not religious –
 is an oxymoron...

To be a Christian is all about discipline...

Remember those words of Jesus

*"If any want to become my followers,
 let them deny themselves
 and take up their cross **daily**
 and follow me."* (Lk. 9: 23)

Luke was the one who added the word **daily**

to that verse

that all of the synoptic writers also quoted.

Luke was very concerned with

with both spirituality, Pentecost...

and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

But he is also concerned with

the discipline of that spiritual practice.
 The 12th chapter of Luke
 is full of encouragement
 for the disciple...
 the disciplined ones...

Today's reading
 is a teaching about possessions...
 or greed.

which if you remember back to Chris' reading
 was the one earthly thing/ non spiritual thing
 that was further defined:

"and greed (which is idolatry)."

Col. 3:5b

Luke 12: 13-21

Someone in the crowd said to him,

"Teacher,

tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me."

But he said to him,

"Friend,

who set me to be a judge

or arbitrator over you?"

And he said to them,

"Take care!

Be on your guard against all kinds of greed;

for one's life does not consist

in the abundance of possessions."

Then he told them a parable:

"The land of a rich man produced abundantly.

And he thought to himself,

"What should I do,

for I have no place to store my crops?"

Then he said,

'I will do this:

I will pull down my barns

and build larger ones,

and there I will store all my grain

and my goods.

And I will say to my soul,

'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years;

relax,

eat,

drink,

be merry.'

But God said to him,

'You fool!

This very night your life is being demanded of you.

And the things you have prepared,

whose will they be?
So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves
but are not rich toward God."

Here ends the reading.

Was the brother
 who asked for a division of property from his brother,
 wrong in asking.
 Not really...
 Unless of course he was the younger brother
 in the story of the prodigal son.
 Or unless he was asking for more
 than he was entitled to...
 Maybe the family farm couldn't be divided.
 But brothers should
 see to each other's welfare.
 Maybe one or both of them were greedy.
 What about the man in the parable,
 the fellow with grain storage issues.
 Was his gain ill gotten? Stolen?
 No, it had just grown...
 He had had a good year...
 Joseph built bigger barns in Egypt...
 and he was praised for that.
 Remember those verses in Ecclesiastes
 about times and seasons...
"A time to sew
and a time to reap
A time to keep,
and a time to throw away..."
 The man in this story
 had lost his sense of timing.
And I will say to my soul,
'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years;
relax, eat, drink, be merry.'

Life isn't something
 that is simply for personal enjoyment...
 There is to be, everyday,
 some work of serving.

This is our congregations 120th birthday.
 For 33 years I have been privileged
 to be a part of this community
 that has worked together to serve God.
 For 25 years before me

some of you worked with Leland Higginbotham.
 You have supported both of us
 sometimes you have worked together with us
 in work that you may not have agreed with...
 You may have thought...
 It should have been done differently.
 Anti war/civil rights/care for the inner city
 reaching out to the poor and homeless...
 Still in the work
 I believe God was served,
 and so were our neighbors.

As names of 50 year members are read today
 you will see we have lots of older members...
 You can probably see that
 even without my reading the names...
 We have few new/young members...
 That makes me sad,
 because I think they would benefit
 from knowing all of you.
 But it doesn't make me sad that I serve here,
 because it has been God's Spirit in you,
 that has served to strengthen
 God's spirit in me.
 Together with God you have made
 all of the difference in my life...
 and I believe the lives of
 all of the people
 who have come here
 to worship
 over the years.
 Thank You.