

Wesley United Methodist Church

November 3, 2013

"Remembering the Saints."

Isaiah 40:27-31, II Corinthians 4:7-18,

On this All Saints Memorial Sunday, we pause to look back. We celebrate the lives of those who were with us for some time; who graced our lives, shared our joys and blessings. Who may have been a good friend, a lover, a parent, a child, a neighbor, a blessing. We celebrate their influence in our lives; those who were our lives and who are no longer in our midst.

For folks who are busy looking ahead, we need a special day to remind us to look back, to pause and re-member what the rush of life can dis-member. To look back and ponder what remember means. All the things we've done and how it's been.

The Apostle Paul tells us that we are always letting go of this life, and of the people and things in this life. His words were, "For while we live we are always being given up to death." Death comes in two ways: the physical and the psychological; it is experienced on the day of departure and in the days of despair, at the moment of death and in the moments of disbelief.

Life, however, is lived in many transitions:

Leaving home; starting a family.

Leaving school; starting a career.

Leaving one place; starting in another place

Leaving one person; starting with another person.

To live on this journey and these transitions requires faith: faith in oneself, in the goodness of others, and, I believe, faith in the Good Book. "I listened to what the Good Book said and it made good sense to me, talkin' about reapin' what you're sowin' people tryin' to be free." Those words are found in the Gospel Changes by John Denver.

The Good Book tells us that in dying, both physical dying and in the psychological dying, we are promised a re-birth and "do-over."

A "do-over," you know, like when you were playing a game as a kid, without the benefits of a referee or coach and something went wrong, someone would yell, "Do-over."

A lot of our emotional fatigue and therapy could be reduced if we could still remember that natural and simple game of life. That eternal promise that this life is a workout for the next life. The promise that in God's ways we see through a glass dimly what lies ahead, and that in the way of Christ we are given a glory beyond comparison.

The Israelites of old have a message for Israelites of today, and for each of us. Home and Homeland is not about our soil, but our soul. Often we reminisce about our homes, where we came from, where we live, and where we want to be buried. I've lived in this country for almost 41 years, but home is where I was born. When I die, I want some of my ashes taken back there--taken home. Not all of us will return to the soil of our birth. Isaiah 40 is written to a people who were in exile, who have lost their homes and homeland. But these people have not lost their faith in a God who promises a new beginning, a new start, a new creation.

People may grow weary and faint, but they will remember their God and wait for Him to call them home. People like us, at times are afflicted but not crushed; at times are struck down, but not destroyed.

Today we remember: those who shared this journey of faith with us; those whom we loved and those who loved us; those whom we could have loved better, and those who loved us best. Those who gave us good words by which to live . Those whom God has called back home.