

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"Who We Were Created to Be" 1/25/23

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)

Being who we were created to be – isn't always easy. It can be hard work. God doesn't ask the impossible of us, though. God gifts us to accomplish His purpose, but doing so is a choice and takes dedication on our part. It can be a struggle and a sacrifice. It's hard work and it's worth it.

The great thinkers and leaders we have heard of didn't magically become the thinkers and leaders they became. There was forming, hits and misses, experiences – some they'd rather have skipped, but which all came together to shape them into the people they became. This is how they acquired the wisdom which they passed down to future generations. We wonder when we think of these people, how did they know that, how did they know what was the right thing to say or do?

It takes a strong foundation. It takes a vision, seeing what God would want. Who will I be? What will I do? How will I react? How do I serve others? How am I kind? How can I work for justice? How can I show God's love in this situation?

"No one worked harder at being Fred Rogers than Fred Rogers himself," his wife, Joanne Rogers, once said. She didn't want her husband to be seen as some kind of saint. She believed that would actually be an insult to his memory, because it obscured just how much effort and intention went into who he was and what he did. Fred Rogers sought out ways to minister, to serve, to reflect God's love and teachings in and through his life, by how He treated others, especially young people. How he acted and reacted, reflected in Whom he believed.

Just as Fred Rogers showed young people their worth; just as the stoics spoke and wrote wisdom; just as the Peter's and Paul's, the Dorcus' and Lydia's of church history served, taught, gave of themselves; we, also, were created in Christ Jesus for good works.

The Holy Spirit has gifted us to do God's work. There are gifts like service, teaching, generosity, leadership, and wisdom which God gives His people so they can be His voice, hands, and heart to the world. There is the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Christ followers produce this fruit in their lives as they follow God, loving God, and one another.

Who we are, how we can act and react comes from our relationship with God. Paul tells the Ephesians, each of us are gifted for our calling. God gave different gifts to His people to "equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." (Eph 4:11-13). God calls us and gifts us to do His work, to encourage each other, to be Church, even when it takes more effort than we feel like putting out.

Please pray with me:

God, our Lord, thank You for claiming us as Your own and for gifting us for Your service. We've heard Your call to do Your work, to love others and to care for them. Thank You for Your life on earth which showed us how we are to live out our gifts and produce the fruit of Your Spirit. Help us to choose the path which reflects Your Love, and for strengthening us when it isn't the easiest way.

Amen.