

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"What does your soul seek?" 7/19/23

You were saved by faith in God, who treats us much better than we deserve.

This is God's gift to you, and not anything you have done on your own.

It isn't something you have earned, so there is nothing you can brag about.

(Ephesians 2:8-9)

Church has done good and bad throughout history. We see the hungry fed, but we also we read of horrid acts committed in the name of religion. The church is an organization on earth, made up of people. The worst things people do, show the character of people. The best things people do, show the character of God. This is Occam's Razor, the simple explanation of why some find comfort in church and others anger. Why some views are divisive and some spread peace.

Religion and relationship are not interchangeable, they are different. Religion is manmade. God invites us into a relationship with Himself. Religion expects works from its followers. It consists of rules and regulations one follows to appease or gain favor from God. Being in a relationship is about opening oneself up to the love and grace God shows to us. It is having a connection to God, trusting God is who He says He is. It is not just a list of dos and don'ts, it is a place of peace, of being connected, accepted. It is also messy. There are doubts and anger, but even through the rough patches there is always love.

When one is in a relationship with God, it is not just knowing it is doing, not to be accepted, but because you are accepted, not to earn favor, but to show appreciation. It is being kind, because you desire to reflect God's love to others.

Relationships develop and grow. There is learning and loving. There is also self-reflection, it's not just about being good, it is about believing, about having hope. God gives us faith, it is a free gift, we do not have to search for it or earn it. We open our hearts, our minds, our imaginations, we exercise our ability to accept what we cannot see and at times do not understand. But we are in relationship, we are not alone. God holds us as we walk with Him. It is a loving relationship. Sometimes we get it, sometimes we don't, we are still human. But there is always forgiveness and acceptance.

It is much freer than trying to earn something we can't even conceive of. It's so much freer than being chained to shame or guilt. Entering into this relationship with God, enables us to be - who we were created to be.

God sustains this relationship, it is not man made, it is enlightening and life giving. It is comfortable, like an old sweater. It is what your soul is seeking.

Please pray with me.

Lord of life, thank You for inviting us into relationship with You, for the gift of faith, for the peace and joy You give to us, the knowledge we belong and are loved. Help us to accept what we don't understand and to seek to know You better. We love You, Lord.

Amen.