



CLPC WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



Alzheimer's Walk Time Changed

You are invited to attend the Alzheimer's walk, which has been moved to 10:00am at Canyon Lake Dam on Saturday, June 19th. We will join Cheryl Grubb and others to raise awareness about Alzheimers. If you have questions, please reach out to Pastor Chad or Cheryl Grubb.



Office Announcement

Wynne Clark will be out of the office from June 28th to July 4th. If you would like to volunteer to come sit in the office from 11am-1pm to answer the phone on one of those days, please contact the office at 830-964-2427 or office@canyonlakepres.org.

Last Sunday Worship Video Available

The link to last Sunday's Worship video can be found below.

<https://youtu.be/WxmqYxsc1HY>





Pastor's Musings

Recently, a friend sent me a text message and asked a deep and meaningful question. "How are you doing spiritually?" she asked, adding that people don't ask that much of pastors. I was grateful for his insightful question because it caused me to think about my answer. Just how am I doing spiritually? And what does it mean to do well, or not so well, in terms of the spirit? So, I thought I'd offer some musings. First, what are NOT signs of "doing well spiritually"?

- It is not a continuous, everything is fine kind of thing.
- It doesn't mean you don't get depressed, sad, anxious or worried.
- It doesn't mean you have no doubts.
- It doesn't mean you don't cry.
- It doesn't mean that you don't have some hard questions for God.
- It doesn't mean you don't use some creative adult words.
- It doesn't mean your prayer life is perfect.
- It doesn't mean you're never afraid.
- It doesn't mean that you feel close to God 24/7.

I could go on, but you get the picture. Sure, it's tempting to portray to the world the image of "having it all together"—especially if you're a pastor and people read what you write, looking for inspiration for their own faith. You feel a sense of responsibility. But if you give in to that temptation, you're not helping anyone. Rather, you are holding up unrealistic expectations of what a true, honest spiritual life looks like. True, honest spirituality, as I have come to understand, prioritizes vulnerability, openness, and change.

So, let me be the first one to say to you that after this brutal year and a half, my spiritual batteries were running low. As if the pandemic wasn't enough, I lost a son, sister-in-law, and beloved colleague in Laura. Couple that with the challenges of virtual ministry and you've got a recipe for burnout. Anyone of these experiences could have upended my faith. And maybe they did, temporarily. But recently, something clicked. I felt within myself a subtle nudge to return to the simple spiritual practices that have sustained me over the years: prayer, silence, giving, reading, and writing. Once I opened myself up to these spiritual practices, it was as if I found my spiritual charger, and the battery life in my spirit began to rise incrementally over time. I'm nowhere near where I need to be. Faith is not a finish line, but a journey with and to God. I'm still exhausted. I still feel fatigued. I'm still catching myself feeling judgmental. But I feel abiding joy, and I firmly believe a new day is dawning, because my trust is in the Lord.

Honest faith requires that we continually ask ourselves, "how am I doing spiritually?"

When I think of an authentic, flesh and blood life of the spirit, I can't help but think of the biblical character Jacob, isolated at the ford of the Jabbok River, wrestling with God (or an angel, depending on the version of the story you've heard). It's an evocative image, because I think a true and honest spiritual life is a wrestling—a struggle. I love it when Jacob holds onto the heel of God and says, "I will not let you go until you bless me!"



Pastor's Musings Continued

That's sort of where I am today. Clinging to God with a prayer: "I will not let you go until you bless me!" So, in response to my friend's question, how am I doing spiritually?

- I will say that the past year and a half has made me think about things in a new light. God is the center of my life. My family is a close second. My children challenge me each day to become a better father and disciple of Jesus Christ. Angela is a gift, and our love continues to expand and grow, even after 15 years, like mustard seeds. The church community continues to be source of hope as you all have upheld me in prayer and love during this excruciating year. Times of worship with you all brings these areas into focus.
- I'm no longer asking, "How will this be possible?" I've never liked that question. It never fails in church meetings when a new idea is proposed the following two questions come out like clockwork: "How will this be possible?" and "How will we pay for this?" During this season of intense challenge, I've seen God move mountains in my life and in our congregation. So, I am embracing a new perspective to trust that if God plants a seed, God will water and nurture the seed to fruition.
- I'm praying more, and now and then I'm paying attention better.
- Scripture speaks loud and clear in times like these. And sometimes I'm just not listening. I am working on listening.
- I'm trying not to judge people so much, when they seem to think the insignificant things are really important or when they choose to major on the minors.
- I'm trying to focus on others and their resiliency, gravitating to healthy leaders, realizing that it's often in times of great challenge that we discover what we are capable of.
- I'm trying my best to practice what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount: that it doesn't help to worry about tomorrow because that only ruins today. I even started carrying a small bird medallion in my pocket as a reminder of Jesus' words about lilies and birds.
- I'm trying to give myself permission to feel sad, because I really did lose a lot last year.
- I'm receiving each day as a precious and unpredictable gift.
- I'm giving thanks each day for strong, wise, and courageous Ruling Elders and Deacons.
- I literally run to the Fellowship Hall every Sunday, because I can't wait to worship with people like you. You nurture my spiritual life more than you know.

That's probably more of an answer than my friend asked for, probably more than you wanted to read, but that's what you get when you ask a preacher who hasn't offered a newsletter type reflection in over a year and a half to reflect. And one of the great blessings of my life is having friends who care enough to ask, "How are you doing spiritually?" I think that, most of the time, I'm doing pretty good.

How are you doing spiritually? Let's get together and chat. My door is always open. To those who have returned to in-person worship, thank you for coming back! If you haven't returned to in-person worship, I want to invite you back to experience the warmth and welcome of CLPC. We miss you!

With Gratitude,
Pastor Chad