

“THE CORNERSTONE”

JUNE 2024 – JULY 2024

First Presbyterian Church PC (U.S.A.)
206 E. 20th Street P. O. Box 444
Falls City, Nebraska 68355
402-245-2650 – <http://www.fallscitypres.org>
Worship Time: 11:00 AM

Pastor's Reflection

As Christian believers, the concepts of power, faith, transformation, and salvation present themselves in a myriad of often unanticipated ways. Though these concepts may initially go unnoticed or be misunderstood, the true essence of God's ways become evident through earnest observation, reflection, and prayer. Acknowledging this requires us to adopt a perspective of deeper curiosity about the world around us and a steadfast faith in God's omnipotent presence.

Take the concept of **power**, for instance. In contemporary society, power is often associated with authority, prestige, or physical strength. However, the Christian understanding of power is radically different. Jesus Christ, in His ministry, exemplified true power, rooted in humility, service, and sacrificial love. One compelling example of this is seen in the life of Mother Teresa. She relinquished a life of comfort and assumed a vow of poverty to serve the destitute in Calcutta. Her influence and spiritual authority flowed not from worldly power but from her profound commitment to serve those in need.

Similarly, the New Testament illustrates that **faith** does not always conform to the expected norms. Consider the story of the Roman centurion who approached Jesus for the healing of his servant. His faith was not in religious law or spectacle but was found in an understanding and trust in Jesus' authority over sickness and death. Despite being a Gentile and a part of the oppressing authority in Judea, his faith was commended by Jesus as greater than anyone in Israel. This teaches us that genuine faith often appears in unanticipated forms and from unexpected sources, challenging us to recognize and respect its diverse appearances in those around us.

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****Transformation**** in the Christian context transcends mere self-improvement. It involves a complete renewal of mind and spirit, guided by the Holy Spirit. A modern example is Joni Erickson, who suffered a tragic accident leaving her a quadriplegic at a young age. In her darkest moments, Joni turned toward God, and her life was transformed, using her circumstance to inspire millions worldwide through advocacy, art, and a ministry that focuses on disability. Her journey illustrates that transformation often starts in the depths of despair and leads to paths of incredible influence and testimony of God's grace.

Lastly, the theme of salvation is often envisioned as a momentous, visible event. Yet, it frequently unfolds in quiet, subtle ways in the life of believers. It is about the daily saving from our sins and the reassurance of God's promises. The story of the thief on the cross next to Jesus is a poignant example. In merely moments, a condemned man sought Jesus' mercy and was promised paradise – his salvation came not through a lifetime of works but through a simple act of faith at the end of his life. This moment serves as a profound reminder that salvation, while grand in its eternal promise, can be granted in quiet, humble moments. It's a comforting reassurance that salvation is not a distant goal but a present reality in our daily lives.

In embracing these insights, we, as believers, are invited to look beyond the surface and recognize the extraordinary ways God moves through ordinary circumstances. It reinforces our understanding of God's hand in our lives requiring a heart attuned to faith and eyes opened by His spirit. Each story and biblical reflection, provides courage to us, anticipating the unexpected, and leading us to a richer, more profound spiritual journey which uplifts and transforms us and those we touch. This exploration of power, faith, transformation, and salvation opens a pathway to a deeper understanding and closer connection with God, where we truly appreciate God's kingdom, where things are indeed not always what they appear to be.

During June, the sermons and pastor's notes will focus on the various ways, we as Christian members are called to look closely and deeply at where, when, and how God works beyond our expectations. I will be honored with your presence during our Sunday worship service as we discover God's surprises for us.

Blessings,

Pastor Rick

WORDS TO PONDER---

The fruit of silence is prayer.

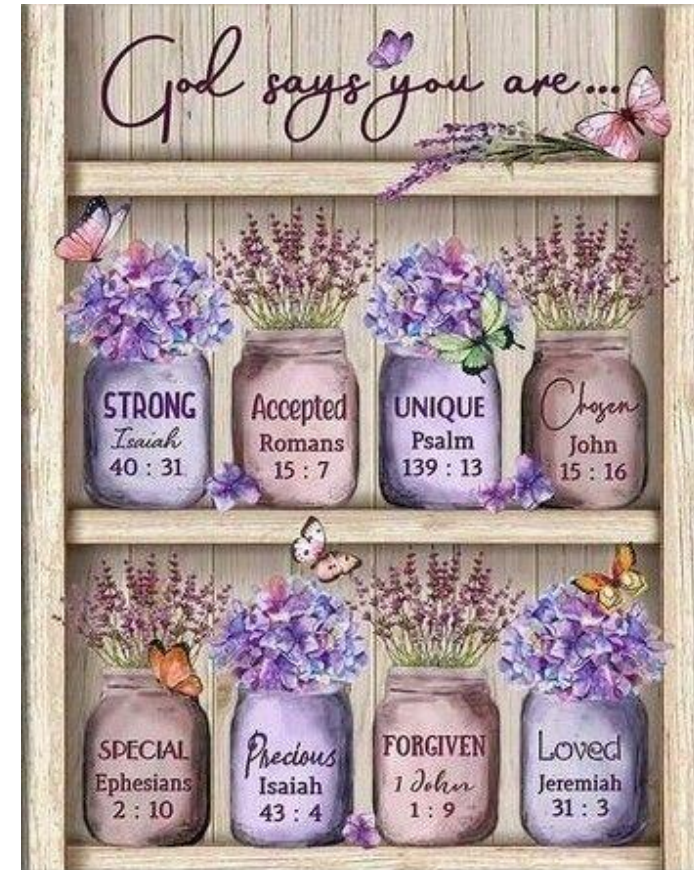
The fruit of prayer is faith.

The fruit of faith is love.

The fruit of love is service.

The fruit of service is peace.

--Mother Teresa of Calcutta



RECOMMENDED READING

Jesus In Me by Anne Graham Lotz
Even If by Mitchel Lee
English Lessons by Andrea Lucado
Beautiful Resistance by Jan Tyson
Mostly What God Does by Savannah Guthrie
Do It Anyway by Tasha Cobbs Leonard

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

All newsletter articles for the August-September newsletter will be due to the office by **July 15th**. Thank you for marking this *important* date on your calendar and submitting good news to be shared!

+++++++CHURCH NEWS+++++++

BLOODMOBILE

The Bloodmobile will be held at Prichard Auditorium on Wednesday July 17, Noon to 6 pm and Thursday, July 18, 9 am to 3 pm. The church will be helping with the event. Sign Up sheets for cookies and volunteers to work will be put out in June. Please mark your calendars and help out as you are able. Thanks.

DIAPER CLOSET BLESSINGS

The Diaper Closet received toys from the First United Methodist Church for redistribution. St. Thomas Episcopal Church recently donated bunches of diapers, pull-ups, baby powder and many other items. We are very thankful to both churches. A thank you note has been sent. Please remember a personal thank you as you encounter the members is also appreciated.

SPECIAL DONATIONS

Donations were made to the Falls City Volunteer Fire Department for their Fire Stomper's Program and to the Richardson Foundation for the Falls City Backpack Program on behalf of the church. Donations were made possible by two members of the church. Thank you for your kindness!

WEDNESDAY MOSAIC TABLE

Wednesday Mosaic Table will continue to be held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of June and July. Please note time change from 6 pm to 7:15 pm. All are welcome!

STOLLER MEMORIALS

The church is grateful for the memorials received on behalf of Betty Stoller and from the Stoller family in memory of Betty and Wayne. Wayne and Betty Stoller were dedicated members of First Presbyterian Church. Both filled offices and completed many other small jobs needing to be done. All was done without any expectation of a pat on the back or recognition.



MUSINGS FROM A RUNNER

Dick James has loved running since junior high. About a year ago, he looked at the Lincoln Marathon records for men ages 70-74. The record, which was set in 1999, was definitely within his running ability. His son and coach Matthew James prepared a training plan and they analyzed the results often. Sunday, May 5, Dick ran the 47th annual Lincoln Marathon. Finishing a marathon requires concentration and mental help. Matthew ran the last eight miles with his dad to help Dick stick to the race plan. Dick was not able to break the record, but he did achieve the second fastest pace on the results list for his age group. The James/Giles/McClintock family celebrated as Matthew, Bridgette, and Jennifer James, plus Marisa McClintock did the half marathon. Family spectators were Sarah James and Russ and Janine McClintock. Congratulations, Dick!