

“Restoration” Sermon for September 30, 2018
Psalm 124, James 5:13-20, Mark 9:42-50

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Sermon Text: 2 Corinthians 2:5a, 7-8, NIV

⁵ If anyone has caused grief.... ⁷ Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸ I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

In James 5:19-20 we read,

19 Brothers and sisters, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that the one who converts the sinner from the error of her or his way shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

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What does this all mean? The original Greek word for truth here is aletheia (truth) = the opposite of illusion. This implies that there are people in churches who are living in a fantasy, not reality!

What is reality? What is this truth? We can note the same Greek word truth in 2 familiar verses:

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John 14:6 - Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

We also read in Ephesians 6:14 - Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist....

And so, anyone who is living a life without Jesus Christ, is living in error! This is a challenge for all of us every day, that we live our lives in Christ?

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When we do not involve Christ in what we are doing, we are wandering from the truth. When Christians ignore and reject the wisdom of God's Word, we are wandering from the truth! We must all be alert about allowing ourselves to wander from the truth. Anyone can wander from the truth. What's the solution? The passage is clear, when someone in the community of faith wanders from the truth, someone must do the ministry of restoration! Who is that someone?

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This someone in James 5:19 is you and me!! And so, what does this mean for us as a community of faith in Jesus Christ?

We can affirm to each other what the Psalmist celebrates in today's Psalter (124),

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- 1 If the Lord had not been on our side—
let Israel say—
- 2 if the Lord had not been on our side
when people attacked us,
- 3 they would have swallowed us alive
when their anger flared against us;
- 4 the flood would have engulfed us,
the torrent would have swept over us,
- 5 the raging waters
would have swept us away.
- 6 Praise be to the Lord,
who has not let us be torn by their teeth.
- 7 We have escaped like a bird
from the fowler's snare;
the snare has been broken,
and we have escaped.
- 8 Our help is in the name of the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

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We can continually affirm to each other what the ancients sang a century ago:

*On Christ the solid rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand*

All other ground is sinking sand.

[picture]

Those who put others down, who discourage others, who criticize others, are walking a dangerous path, but the ministry of restoration is a ministry that multiplies the blessings to us and to the one needing warning, support, nurture and ultimately restoration. Thanks be to God.

⁷ Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸ I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

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We are here to forgive and comfort. We are here to guard each other's souls, so that no one will be overwhelmed with guilt, grief and sorrow. We can restore each other, as we continue to embrace the truth, which is Christ in us, the hope of glory. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.