

Hello This is Pastor Matt Woods, Pastor at Grace Lutheran Church in New Albany, Indiana and this is a weekly devotion for June 15, 2020

“It’s the Little Things”

Last fall we had a little mouse that got into our garage. We found this out in an a very unusual way. Turns out we had to take Tricia’s car in for some work and low and behold the mechanic found a newspaper nest built into the engine compartment. I had just changed the oil in the car myself just a few days before—(And no Bill my work wasn’t the reason we had to take the car in. It was already scheduled to go in.) So, that little critter had build a nest using newspaper we had in a box. We use the newspaper to start fires in the fireplace which sat on to of our freezer. So that little thing went all the way up to the top of the freezer, climbed into the box, nibbled off a piece of newspaper, and carried it all the way to the engine of my wife’s car and built a nest. It must have taken many trips. Really quite impressive. Well, the mechanic told us about the nest and shared with us that it was a good thing it was found because such things can lead to fires.

Later that week I decided to change the oil in my car. And you know what I found. In the time my wife’s car was in the shop (two days) I found out that that little mouse had build a nest in my engine compartment. I should probably hire this thing to help me with VBS each year. It’s truly impressive. However, because he was a mouse he had to go. My wife is deathly afraid of mice, stand on the table- afraid of them. So, we made it our mission to evict our little tenant. We eventually managed to catch the mouse in a trap and put it outside a long way from the house. What an impressive little worker that thing was.

It’s the little things. Are the little things really all that little? Consider what a colony of ants can do, or termites. Ever notice the little things aren’t really that insignificant at all?

Consider Psalm 139 with some selected verses—I won’t read all of the Psalm but listen to all the little things.

¹ You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.

⁵ You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.

¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body;

all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.

¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, God!

How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ Were I to count them,

they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.

Did you notice the little things in this one passage? Your thoughts—the Lord knows them. Your thoughts matter. How you think about others, yourself all matters. For out of the heart come the things that make one clean or unclean. As you think so you go.

Your Words matter. Countless passages refer to the power of your words to bring life or death. Are your words colorful? Are your words uplifting? Are your words thoughtful and wise?

How important is our inmost being? What's our hearts desire? How important is the way we treat our own bodies by what we eat, exercise, and so on? God knows us down to the cellular level even when those RNA/DNA patterns were woven together in our mother's womb. Give thanks for eyes that can see and ears that can hear and legs that can walk. Recent days remind us that our inmost being needs to be healthy.

The Lord discerns my going out and my lying down—the Lord gets us. But the Lord also knows what our habits are, what our secret things are, and what it is that makes us really tick. If the Psalmist could count the times that God thinks of us, it says those thoughts would be so vast they would outnumber the grains of sands on the planet. The things in us that the Lord is paying attention to are not trivial nor really all that small. Those little things do a lot to identify us; the way we carry ourselves, the phrases we use, the unique mannerisms. Those things are usually subtle but often trigger a memory of the people we associate with those little things.

Consider the little, seemingly, unimportant things in scripture. Jesus says the hairs on our heads are all numbered in Luke 12:7. Makes sense considering what we just heard in Psalm 139. How about the faith as small as a humble mustard seed? We know from Matthew 10:29-31 that his eye is on the little sparrow and we are worth more than many sparrows. We see the love Jesus has for little Zaccheus, who climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus in Luke 19:1-10. How about the widow's offering of two pennies in Mark 12:41. Jesus said that widow gave more than all the others because she was willing to give all she had. And how powerful was a little boy's lunch in the hands of Jesus at the feeding of the 5000 in John 6. Five small loaves, and two fish, from a little boy who was willing to give what he had to make a difference. The small things are not insignificant.

Consider marriage. It's the little details that can irritate or bless. A majority of marriage counseling that I do often revolves around little things like not picking up after himself, or not helping out with the kids, not communicating because one or both prefers to use mindreading, not watching the budget—"Do we really need all this stuff?" Marriage can become brittle with hundreds of little chicken pecks that finally build up and explode. But yet they are often fixable things. Same can apply to friendships. Same can apply to relationships with coworkers. I think you understand what I am getting at.

The good news is that little things are not insignificant. Why do you suppose the Gospels record the words of Jesus saying, "Father forgive them," or "Today you will be with me in paradise?" The crowds didn't catch them. They were too busy mocking Jesus. But the Gospel

writers caught them and shared them. We see in those little sentences words that show us the heart of Jesus as He goes to the cross. These are little “I love you” phrases. And yes, how powerful are those three little words “I love you” from a parent, from a spouse, or from the Church. How important are those little things that we do to bring a little more unity to a divided country; a little more constructiveness in a time when things are broken, and a little more of Jesus to a time that needs Him.

It’s the little things. The little word of encouragement, the little act of love, offering the little extra time and effort, a little more kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control. The little things can often become the biggest difference. May the Lord bless the little things we do to be fruitful, helpful, and good so that a little more Jesus gets into our world. In the name of Jesus.

And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with His favor and give you His peace. Amen

Pastor Matt Woods
John 3:30