

Sermon: "The Windshield"

Here is an historical foot note you probably have never heard before. Dorothy Levitt was a British Secretary who shocked society by becoming a race car driver. What's more she became very good at winning many races. In 1906 she set the woman's world speed record of 91 miles per hour. She was labelled the "fastest woman on earth." Later she would write a book titled "The Woman and the Car," for women who wanted to learn how to drive. Among the techniques in the book was this, "Women should carry a hand-held mirror so that they can hold it aloft from time to time, to see behind while driving in traffic. In 1914, car manufacturers acted on Levitt's suggestion by attaching rear-view. Mirrors on vehicles sold in public. We can thank "women's ingenuity" for another useful invention.

I find that as I attempt to gracefully age, I find that I am being more reflective than at other life phases. I look into the rear-view mirror and evaluate where I have been, what kind of various life experiences I have known, and what kind of person I have been in my various life roles. Perhaps because more time has gone by than what may be left, I say to myself that this is probably more the norm.

It is at such a time that I remind myself that the future still provides opportunities that matter. Glancing backward is ok for learning but staring too long into the rear-view mirror often may lead to an accident. It is said, "the windshield is built much larger than the rearview mirror for a reason," and more of my time still should be directed there. Our scripture readings today, and others, so instruct.

We all had an image in our mind of how life is supposed to be. We believe it is the road we are supposed to take, marked by happy family, meaningful career, great friends and exciting adventures. Some are blessed to have the journey go as they envisioned. For most the road can get bumpy with hidden potholes, and occasional wrong turns. Sometimes there are major detours. Making u-turns may have helped, but life consequences from mistakes and poor choices are real.

The road we are now on is hopefully stable and straight...at least for the time being. The road that we could have been on is gone. If we focus too much on it, we can be robbed of what still can be. There is "good" in goodbye for a reason. We can increase the distance from where we have been to where we are going by fixing our eyes straight ahead...just as today's scripture instructed. It is the road ahead that requires our attention. The road ahead is paved with the potentials for hope and satisfaction. So, it is the windshield and the road ahead that deserves our priority. Still, at any life stage, is the life God can bless us with. We were also instructed to fully live it in love with God. "Love others well, don't hide behind a mask-love authentically."

What can we do to make sure we are riding properly as we drive ahead?

First, we might ask ourselves, "Are we making our plans without God's involvement?" God wants to bring purpose to our lives. Me? When I make plans, I want everything laid out. I try to plan out all of the details in the same way I plan a trip. I am famous for my "Things to Do Lists." I seem to want to know the entire itinerary before I begin my journey. It mostly works for me. But I have come to see that it can be different with God. He may reveal his intent for me, step by step. I believe that God reveals details when he knows that we are ready, and when we

are able to hear it. Remember the words of Jesus to his disciples, “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.”

So how can we prepare ourselves to receive what God wishes to reveal to us? First, we should ask him for it. The bible tells us that often we have not, because we ask not. God promises in Jeremiah 33:3 “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.” I confess, that intrigues me! God wants to reveal things to us when we ask with good motives and proper persistence. The word “call” to me suggest we need to keep checking in with God and. not simply make a one-time request.

Secondly, God shares information to those who manage plans well, even in the face of opposition, frustration of impatience. God entrusts us to bare criticism, waiting or disappointment.

Third, God assists those who are faithful, even in small things. I am reminded once again, even at this advancing life stage, we are always at the right point in our lives to decide to partner with God for our future. The windshield then provides a clear view.

By the way? I believe the same is true as we work together to develop plans for our church. The committees and task forces charged with implementing elements of the plan should carefully discern if we are moving in a direction that God wills for us. God will be there as we seek to overcome the challenges, hurdles, and impatience we may encounter along the way.

I close with the words of Jeremiah; “For I know the plans that I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you; plans to give you hope and a future.”

So, no matter our present age, let the future still be the mold that shapes us, not the past.

Amen.