



Jacob's Ladder



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Rev. Christopher C. Diggs, Pastor,
Burns UMC & Hammitt Hill UMC

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Disciples Called to Action: Engaging Small Groups

by Sis. Ann Deloris Herod



The scripture that the Lord led to me is -1ST CORINTHIANS 13: 1-13 -Focus verse in part is "but the greatest of these is Love".

Now, what does Love have to do with the theme "Disciples Called to Action: Engaging in Small Groups"? Thinking back on the key verse 13, "And now abideth faith, hope and love, these three, but the greatest of these is Love. True love requires action. We can talk about love all day long, sing songs about it, write poems or little notes that proclaim our love, and even preach sermons that encourage it, but until we put that love into action and really mean it; our words are nothing but "sounding brass or a tinkling

cymbal".

There was one person who did not just speak about love; Jesus Christ showed it every day of His life. Jesus got among the people, reached out and touched, fed, healed the sick, and even raised the dead. He rescued those who were lost. In His teaching of love, He became the perfect model. He showed how to comfort those who were distressed, lift up those who had fallen down, and strengthen and restore the feeble minded. He is the perfect minister of love. Love inspired our Heavenly Father to create us with an everlasting spirit; love is what led our Savior to the Garden of Gethsemane and

to the cross to make Himself a ransom for our sins. Love is the grand motive of the plan of salvation; it is the source of our happiness, peace, joy, and healing. Love is His precious grace and mercy that he freely bestows upon us. Jesus is Love, and Jesus called us to Love in JOHN 13:34-35 - "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love for one to another". This is what love has to do with it.

I believe that true disciples respond to and demonstrate their call to action because of their love. You see that divine love is what makes us respond to and act upon our mission statement of the United Methodist Church, "making disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world. If we truly have accepted God as our savior, then we have in us what He is, and that is Love. And when we put our love into action, then we are making our mission statement relevant. . . . First there is the question of what or who is the church? How we perceive the church is quite important in determining how we live out our life in faith. When we speak of the church it is not a place, the building, location, or the denomination. We, God's people, who are in Christ Jesus, are the church. . . . The church is a body of believers who have been called out from the world by God to live as His people under the authority of Jesus Christ (EPHESIANS 1:22-23). This group of believers or "the body of Christ" began in ACTS 2 on the Day of Pentecost through the work of the Holy Spirit and will continue to be formed until the day of the rapture of the church, we believers. The church comes together or assembles for the purpose of bringing each member to spiritual maturity (EPHESIANS 4:13). . . . The church is the body of Christ. We are his heart, his mouth, his hands and feet -reaching out to the world, 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:27. So when we speak of the church we are not referring to this

building, but the assembly of believers or congregation that meets together physically for worship, fellowship, teaching, prayer and encouragement in the faith (HEBREWS 10:25).

Now, who is a disciple, and what are disciples called to action to do? . . . What does it really mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? He or she is someone who learns from Him to live like Him; someone who, because of God's awaking grace, changes his or her words and ways to the words and ways of Jesus. . . . To be a disciple of Jesus you will love one another- JOHN 13:35- "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another". . . . What does Love have to do with it? It's an action word. If we have the Love of God inside of us as disciples, it will show up on the outside. . . . Now who makes disciples? Disciples make disciples! That's the Great Commission! . . . To tell the truth, we the church have been guilty of wanting more members to join and not making disciples. The church is not the membership, but the integrity of our discipleship. It is the integrity of our love. . . . In the United Methodist Church, laity takes seriously their call to ministry. They serve as lay leaders, lay servants, lay ministers, missionaries, deaconesses, home missionaries, class leaders, liturgists, lay speakers, United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women, musicians, the choir and director, ushers, and many others. We are disciples and are called to action inside and outside the walls of this building. . . .

In conclusion: We are the disciples in our theme, and we need to stand up, step out, and serve in ministry, and there are many ministries. . . . Disciples are called to action and will respond to the call because of their love!

Ann Deloris Herod served as Lay Speaker on Laity Sunday, October 19, 2014. These are highlights from her speech. She is married to James Herod and is a teacher, Certified Lay Speaker, mother, and daughter-in-law of our own Rev. Arthur Herod.

It's Time to Grow Up!

by Minister Laura Gillom

About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

—HEBREWS 5:11-14



In order to grow up, we first must realize there is a difference in getting older and growing up. There is more to growing up than just getting older. It takes a desire to grow, it takes nourishment, it takes exercise and practice, and it takes time and patience. It is no

shame to be a baby if you were born a few months ago, but if a person has been a child of God for several years and has not grown, he or she has a problem. Everyone needs to grow as a Christian, and everyone can grow, if he or she simply applies the Bible principles of growth.

There are four problems identified in the text: laziness (dullness) toward the Word, inability to teach the Word to others, a diet of only elementary truths in the Word, and lack of skill in applying the Word.

The people of Rome had been Christians for an extended period of time. There was no excuse for them to still be where they were spiritually. Every Christian becomes capable of instructing others when he or she learns the elementary truths of the faith. This is true whether one has the gift of teaching or not. The problem: when we fail to pass on what we know, we begin to lose what we know. Eventually, we may need to relearn the most basic teachings of Scripture.

When we stop growing, we start shrinking.

The writer's point in these verses is not just that spiritual babies lack information, which they do, but that they lack experience. A person becomes a mature Christian not only by gaining information, though that is foundational, but by using that information to make decisions that are in harmony with God's will. Practice is essential for maturity.

Growth is development or improvement toward a goal called "maturity" or in the Bible, "perfection". When one is "born again" as a child of God, he or she is spiritually immature. As time passes, he or she should develop the qualities or abilities which the Bible says characterize the mature. A congregation matures as its individual members mature. EPHESIANS 4:14-15 encourages us to be no longer children, but to grow up in Christ. 2ND PETER 3:18 also encourages us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As with the muscles in our bodies, if we don't use what we have gained spiritually, we will lose it. It's time for US to grow up!

Laura Gillom is married to Louis Gillom, and they have three adult children and one grandchild. She has a bachelors degree in Social Work from Ole Miss, a master's degree in Social Work from Southern Miss, and is currently pursuing a Master's of Divinity from Memphis Theological Seminary. Laura is on staff as a therapist and social worker supervisor at Tri-Lakes Behavioral Health. She is a member of Providence UMC and completing her candidacy in the United Methodist Church.

Free Parking

Great ideas sometimes come quickly...very quickly. BUMC Pastor Christopher C. Diggs decided as the first few cars rolled in for the Ole Miss/Presbyterian game that it was the day for a first... **free game day parking**. This first unofficial Customer Appreciation Day at BUMC went over very well with 25 cars parked and over 100 patrons feeling very grateful and appreciated. Many left donations to show their gratitude for both the free parking and shuttle service while promising to pick our lot for their next paid parking foray to Oxford. As a great year of parking revenue comes close to the end, it always great to show our thanks to God and our community.

—Rhondalyn Peairs

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