

Inspired Word

Streamed live November 17, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1d-EM2CvZc>

We remember Phyllis and Rose.

EXHORTATION

In the middle of that struggle, in the middle of the denying yourself to take up your cross is a choice. It's a choice, but it's also a bubble of grace that you step into. "How do you do that?" The answer is, "Well, I don't do that. I have the grace around me allowing me to do that. It's the Holy Spirit welling up in me that allows me to be that servant heart at that moment to the person in front of me who most needs it."

The offering becomes joy because of the grace. If you were asked to do that on your own strength, with your own power, forget it! You'd never get there. But, if we ask for it, God gives us the gift and the grace we need for the moment we're in. Stepping into that bubble of grace and asking the Lord to be there with us is a joy. Service becomes a joy.

Saint Francis of Assisi hated lepers. He did not like discomfort. He did not like the smelliness of the lepers. When Jesus said, "Go embrace the leper", he had to step out in faith. It was denying himself because that wasn't something he wanted to do. It was very unpleasant. But as he did it, he realized he was hugging Christ. A sweet smell came over the situation. It rocked his world and it changed his life. "Take up your cross. Follow Me. Meet Me there. I'm on the other side waiting for you."

SCRIPTURE / PRAYER

This is a reading from 2 Cor 1:4: "He comforts us in our afflictions and thus enables us to comfort those who are in trouble with the same consolation we have received from Him." We give you thanks, Jesus, that you have invited each one of us to come to be Your disciples, to carry Your Cross and to follow You. That's the invitation.

You also give us the consolation, the comfort. Only with You are we able to carry our Cross. Only in You are we able to glorify God our Father. So tonight, we ask for each one of us, that we might truly embrace Your promise that You do comfort us. It is through Your grace that we carry the Cross and know Your resurrection. May we bring that same consolation to one another. May we find Your strength within all of those that are suffering throughout our world today. We give you thanks that You're with us every step.

SENSE / EXHORTATION

Sometimes we wonder, "Why did we go through series, like the metanoia series?" There are so many ways that God can touch us and help us grow in our faith. This series asks a lot of hard questions, but it also offers some beautiful answers.

The last session was on inheriting eternal life. I thought it was going to be about one thing and it turned out to be on something else. In a small sharing time afterwards, I realized it wasn't about eternal life: it was about inheritance. Some parents are able to give their children lots of inheritance and a very large legacy of wealth when they pass on. God is generous and He gives lots of gifts. Some parents are not well off and their inheritance is of a different kind. It's the legacy of their life. It's allowing their children to be a part of the family, of being around that table, of laughing, of knowing them, of inheriting their values in real time, every day that they're there.

I was at another funeral of a lovely woman who was 97. She received a second baptism weeks before she passed. So, at 97 years of age, she got to experience that again. She came out of that water even more in love with her Jesus. She had done Bible studies her whole life. She had loved her Jesus a long time.

At the reception after the funeral, I was talking with one lady who was just so kind and beautiful and gentle. She shared something and I sensed a sadness, a sense of feeling not worthy of God's love, even though she wanted God's love.

I just said, "He wants to bring us into that family. We can inherit the family table. That's how we inherit that life, the legacy of Christ. The Father says, 'Come to the family table. You are welcome. You don't have to just

stand at the window and look in the window. You're welcome to come to the table. Be part of the family now." She started to cry. I asked if we could pray, and we just prayed right there on the spot.

Had I not gotten to do the Metanoia experience that week, and had that not been on my heart, I wouldn't have had that to share with her. So don't be afraid to share what you get, even just one little piece. You don't have to be one of the hand-picked special children to share your story, to listen for somebody's need and for their hurt. Speak God's love into that because it's so needed.