

“Livin’ the Dream: Worldwide”

John 3:16-17, Acts 1:8

October 4, 2015

Livin’ the Dream. For us not a sarcastic statement but a realization of saying that things are going well. We are Livin’ the Dream. Church in Florida, no mortgage, no debt...so then we can just remain status quo. I DON’T THINK SO!!!! God has not called us to stop. We cannot stop doing ministry while there are still people in the world that do not know Jesus.

So let’s not only be Livin’ the Dream but be praying about our God-sized dream. A God-sized dream is a dream sooo big that the only way we can accomplish it and live it is to rely on God’s power through the Holy Spirit. So let’s dream. Yes continue to be Livin’ the Dream but also continue to have a God sized dream where we know that it is because of God, yes a God thing, that we are able to be do what we do.

Beautiful images that Vicci Kendall has provided for our sermon series. Appropriate for us on in this area of Florida to be on the beach, relaxing and saying...Ah, Livin’ the Dream. When you look out you see the massive expanse of the ocean. The ocean keeps going and going and going. The rest of the world is out there. So as we are busy Livin’ the Dream here in Palm Harbor do we really care about the World out there? What about Livin’ the Dream worldwide?

A man has a dream and arrives at the gates of heaven. St. Peter asks, "Denomination?" The man says, "Baptist" St. Peter looks down his list and says, "Go to Room 24, but be very quiet as you pass Room 8."

In this dream another man arrives at the gates of heaven. "Denomination?" "Lutheran." St. Peter says, "Go to Room 18, but be very quiet as you pass Room 8."

A third man arrives in this dream at the gates of heaven and St. Peter says, "Denomination?" "Presbyterian." "Go to Room 11, but be very quiet as you pass Room 8."

The man says, "I can understand there being different rooms for different denominations, but why must I be quiet when I pass Room 8?"

St. Peter tells him, "Well, the Methodists are in Room 8, and they think they're the only ones here."

Oh beloved not so. Not so.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism said this: **“I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation.” –Journal, June 11, 1739.**

Yes there are historical roots to the fact that we are mission minded and that we should be concerned about the world. What do mean by “the world is my parish?”

Our United Methodist Book of Discipline describes for us what each Methodist Church should be about:

**¶ 120. *The Mission*-The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.**

To really be Livin' the Dream we need to be making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of Palm Harbor. No.....disciples that will transform the world. I wish someone would ask 'How are we going to do that?' (I'm so glad you asked.)

Again here is what our United Methodist Discipline says:

**¶ 121. *Rationale for Our Mission*-The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by proclaiming the good news of God's grace and by exemplifying Jesus' command to love God and neighbor, thus seeking the fulfillment of God's reign and realm in the world. The fulfillment of God's reign and realm in the world is the vision Scripture holds before us. The United Methodist Church affirms that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and the Lord of all.**

Not just United Methodist vision, but from God's Word---"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

Yes, He has the whole world in His hands. **(Image)** God gave His son for the world so they...the world could have eternal life. He came, it says in verse 17, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. "Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and the Lord of All." (Book of Discipline) Woo-hoo!!!

Our second scripture that Jamie Hammond our new Missions Director read is Acts 1:8 **(map image)** Notice the location of Jerusalem...Judea...and then Samaria. And then it says we are to go to the ends of the earth. It certainly is a ripple effect **(image of ripples in water)**. From Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria, to the ends of the earth.....the reach keeps getting bigger and bigger.

However, I want you to look at the verse again in a little different way. **Acts 1:8English Standard Version (ESV) <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem AND in all Judea AND Samaria, AND to the end of the earth."**

Notice anything. Yes, I've emphasized the word "and." They are not just to minister in Jerusalem. They are not just to minister in Judea. Not just in Samaria...and then once that is done go to the end of the earth. The AND means doing all. Pinellas County AND Pasco County AND Florida AND the United States AND the world.

Now hold it Pastor....how in the world....literally....are we going to do that? Friends are we Livin' the Dream....the God-sized dream?

Our 1551 prayer team on Mondays at 3:51 p.m. is to pray for Missions. Tomorrow as we pray at 1551 lift up Jamie Hammond our new Missions Director....The groundwork has been laid on which Jamie is excited and capable of building upon. Today is no "co-incidence" that we are talking about Livin' the Dream Worldwide as we kick off Operation Christmas Child.

Since 1993, the Samaritan's Purse project, Operation Christmas Child, has collected and delivered more than 124 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 150 countries and territories. In 2015, Operation Christmas Child hopes to collect enough shoebox gifts to reach another 11 million children.

More than 4.7 million children have participated in The Greatest Journey, Operation Christmas Child's follow-up program that is offered to many children who receive shoebox gifts. The Greatest Journey is implemented through a global church network to help children learn how to know and follow Jesus. The Greatest Journey is a 12-lesson Bible study course guiding them through what it means to faithfully follow Jesus Christ.

Since 2009, millions of children around the world have learned what it means to faithfully follow Jesus Christ through The Greatest Journey. As a result, lives are being changed for eternity and new churches are springing up in communities across the globe.

You beloved are a part of Livin' the Dream worldwide. Last week baskets with goodies, a gift card and a devotion book were delivered to 12 fire stations, and we gave that devotion booklet to all First Responders last week. You are doing it.

We have an emphasis on our Children's Home and you meet that goal every year. We have different Mission of the Months and your response is tremendous. We have participated in Imagine No Malaria, Stop Hunger Now, Refugee Relief, supported Methodist missionary Jonathon McCurley in Japan, mission trips by Students and Adults to Belize, mission trip to Costa Rica, PB&J missions for the Homeless, Feeding the Homeless, Metropolitan Ministry Pasco, Pak a Sack for school children, teaching GED classes, supporting one of PHUMC's own in Amy Sticha and her mission endeavors. All ages have been all in! The list could go on and on.

Let me share one of the latest...thanks to Ron, Pillar Leader Ken Martin, and Rev. Cathy....this is a ministry in our Judea if you will. Joining Hands United Methodist Church was in the Metropolitan Ministries Pasco building, but Metropolitan Ministries needed the space so Joining Hands UMC moved to a location very near their old site that is now Metropolitan Ministries Pasco. Pastor Mary felt a calling to continue to minister to those that need showers and to have a place to wash their clothes. Your Go Pillar here at PHUMC decided not just to provide coins for people to wash their clothes once, but decided to purchase washer and dyers and to provide a place for them to take showers. Woo-hoo!!!!

Well done good and faithful servants....you are Livin' the Dream. I am proud of you and the Kingdom work that you are doing. But we are not done yet! We are not called to hesitate; we are not called to stop. But we are called to the AND ministry. Jerusalem AND Judea, AND Samaria, AND to the end of the earth. It's a Bible thing! What is the God-sized dream?

What if we began praying and dreaming that God would rise up full time missionaries from this congregation to go and tell the Good News of Jesus. What if we had a God-sized dream to build a church in a third world country and not only build the church but to pay the pastor's salary, and not only that but send our choir down once a quarter to sing, and to send our young adults and adults down to conduct Vacation Bible School. Oh, beloved....God is not done yet. Livin' the Dream...but what is PHUMC's God-sized dream?

Let me quote a theologian that you and even children have heard of. His name is Buzz Light Year who gives us this spiritual nugget: **(image) To Infinity and Beyond.** Oh beloved, To the end of the earth, to infinity and beyond---for the sake of eternity to belong.

A poem attributed by St. Teresa of Avila in the 1500's says it so well:

Christ Has No Body  
By St. Teresa of Avila (1500 A.D.)

*Christ has no body now on earth but yours,  
No hands but yours,  
No feet but yours,  
Yours are the eyes through which is to look out Christ's compassion to the world;  
Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good;  
Yours are the hands with which he is to bless men now.*

Today is World Wide Communion day. **(image)** This tradition of all Christians around the world regardless of denominations to have Communion on the first Sunday in October began in 1933 at a Presbyterian Church. To transform the world for Christ we need to have Christian unity. We are reminded that the chalice is the blood of Christ poured out for the world. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. In order that the world might be saved through him.

We should care; we do care about the transformation of the world. Help us to keep Livin' the Dream...thanks be to God for what you through the power of God do...but help us to also have a God-sized dream----for the sake of His kingdom.