

Seedling Group Questions for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany (January 27, 2019)

The sermon can be found at www.lipstosing.wordpress.com

Questions for Opening Up

What is something unique about your hometown? If someone was thinking about visiting, what would you think they would need to know first?

What do you think is something unique about your area or neighborhood of Richmond?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

We often discern our spiritual gifts (gifts given by the Holy Spirit for the work of ministry) in community, but could you share with the group: what is one spiritual gift that you believe you have been given? How have you been able to use your gift?

Paul says, “the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.” How have you seen this to be true? Is there someone you can think of who might be an example of this?

Read Luke 4:14-21

What do you think people were saying about Jesus in their report about him? If you were to give a report of Jesus, what would you include?

Jesus could have read any passage from Isaiah. What does this passage say about who Jesus is and what he will do?

Putting Things Together

The Nehemiah reading is essentially the story (not included here but from Nehemiah chapter 8) or the captive Israelites returning home to Jerusalem and being led in worship of the Lord for the first time in a generation. What things, people, or forces keep us captive today?

In the distracted and distracting world in which we live, what tools or techniques have you found helpful for dialing into the moment at hand and savoring the day at hand?

Making It Personal

Joseph tells the story of the youth group filling Ziploc bags with lip balm, toothbrushes, etc. and handing them out to people around town who looked like they could use help as an example of ministry and the place where we meet Jesus. How have you met Jesus through service? What service do you think God may be calling us to?

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

The apostle and pastor Paul uses the metaphor of the human body to describe how intimately connected we are in the church. For this struggling congregation in Corinth, Paul delivers a vital message of unity that is a mark of the church today.

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²²On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ^{31a}But strive for the greater gifts.

Gospel: Luke 4:14-21

Near the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry, he visits his hometown of Nazareth. In the words of Isaiah, he states and claims his identity, purpose, and mission.

¹⁴Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

¹⁶When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”