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WELCOME BACK TO CHURCH PBC!



July 2020

It was July 2019. Six retired Marine Corps buddies, who, upon retirement from the service, had settled in different parts of the United States, scheduled a 24-hour deep sea fishing trip in the Gulf of Mexico as an every five year "just guys" reunion. Each of the men flew from their respective hometowns into the Pensacola, Florida airport. They all made reservations at the same Holiday Inn Express, and met for dinner at a place called The Shrimp Bucket to finalize all their plans on the eve of their fishing excursion.

The next morning began early as the chartered boat was scheduled to leave the dock at 7:00 a.m. The 24-hour fishing trip, which would take the men about 100 miles off the Gulf Coast, cost the men a flat rate of \$4,000. The fee included tackle, rods and reels, licensing, live bait, ice, and fishing cleaning services. The only supplies the men had to bring were food, drinks, sunglasses, hats, sunscreen and cameras.

The guys had been on one of these excursions only once since leaving the Marine Corps. That trip, five years earlier, was only a 12-hour fishing trip, and resulted in taking in an assortment of fish including Red Snapper, Grouper, Trigger, Amberjack, King Mackerel, Wahoo, Mahi Mahi, the limit contingent upon the type fish the men caught. That first trip whetted their appetite for a 24-hour overnight fishing trip.

Seven o'clock the next morning found all six men boarded and supplied with everything they needed for the trip. The boat, a 36-foot Albemarle sport fishing boat called "Sea Ya Later!" was manned by a crew of three: the captain, who everyone called "the Skipper," a first mate who only went by "Bubba," and an errand boy the Marines nicknamed "Little Buddy" after the name the Skipper on Gilligan's Island gave to Gilligan.

The "Sea Ya Later!" reached its fishing hole at just before 10:00 a.m. By 7 p.m., the men, who by then wore sunburns in spite of an early lathering of sunscreen, had taken in an impressive array of fish. As the sun set, the Skipper notified the men that the nighttime afforded opportunities to catch a different species of fish. The captain's news reinvigorated the men with anticipation.

Shortly after midnight, Parker, one of the Marines, felt a sudden and overwhelming tug at one of his fishing lines.

Thirty minutes of wrestling finally convinced him to plea for help from some of the other guys. After continued fighting with whatever was on the other end of the line, the Skipper and Bubba came over to provide expert help.

As the men slowly lifted the catch close enough to the surface to view, the Skipper pulled in closer. "Wow!" he said, "in all my years as a fishing captain, I've never seen anyone catch one of those!"

Gilligan pushed his head between the men to get a look. "That's a Smalltooth Sawfish!" he said, impressing the others with his young knowledge of marine life.

The fish was young, stretching about 12 feet in length including its long sawtooth snout. Smalltooth Sawfish usually grow to as much as 22 feet long. The fish showed signs of distress which accounted for the difficulty in reeling it in. As the fish drew closer to the surface, Bubba, the first mate, noticed netting residue wrapping around parts of the fish's body.

"We won't be able to keep that one," the Skipper said. "Smalltooth Sawfish are an endangered species." Then, speaking to Parker, he said, "Get you a good picture and then cut the line and let him go."

"But we need to free him of the nets," Gilligan said. "That would take forever," Bubba snapped. "Besides, he's probably past saving anyways."

"But he's special!" Gilligan responded.

"Every fish is special!" Bubba said, seemingly irritated by having to continue the conversation.

"When people say 'Save the Whales' that don't mean 'the heck with all the other fish in the ocean'," he said. "It just means the whales need saving, they're endangered. Sure, all the other fish are special, but you are missing the point!"

"Yes," the Skipper said, "and for these big fellas, people have been missing the point for a long, long time."

#BLM

Jimmy O



Jed Cornelison Contemporary Worship Leader

How do we praise God in the uncertainty? How is it we continue to trust in His ways and not allow ourselves to be overcome by the things of this world? As a child of God, we are loved beyond comprehension. His grace flows like a river winding its way along steady and unbroken. Even knowing all of this it is still hard to allow ourselves to praise Him in the valley. Some days are easier than others to submit and be open to God's will. We have to, as Romans 12:12 tells us, "rejoice in hope!" We praise God for the hope and trust we put in Him. When I find myself looking around wondering what is going on I am reminded of God's word to us.

Romans 12:9-18 is where I often find myself going when I am in doubt or struggling with this world.

Behave Like a Christian

⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; ¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹² rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; ¹³ distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Behave like a Christian! Sometimes I need that slap on the wrist. If there was ever a time to need a reminder on how we as believers of Christ should act this passage hits the nail on the head! (and me!) What always strikes me as the underlying theme of this passage is LOVE. Love like Christ. I challenge you over the next few weeks to wake up every morning and read this passage before you start your day. Before you even walk out of the door God's desire for you and His children will be clear! Laugh with those who laugh, mourn with those who mourn, help those who can't, Love, Love, Love, and most of all, seek God in His word and through prayer and song!

I love you PBC family!



Eric Patterson PBC Student Minister

What did you get?

Here we are, almost home. I know it has been very difficult for everyone. We, as a church, have had to deal with Covid-19 and racial issues that have seemed to turn our country upside down. We have all dealt with these scary times to the best of our abilities. In January, people planned and made resolutions for the year in hopes to see a change in our lives. This year, more than years past, we are reminded that the world is bigger than we thought it was. We have been thrust into a time when we have to be thoughtful of others. These others may be people with compromised immune systems, or people who have been treated unfairly. Right now, we are reminded of the Gospel and its push toward focusing on others rather than ourselves.

So, my question to you is, what did you get? Out of all of the things going on in our society, what did you come away with? Are you a better listener? Are you more forgiving? Is your relationship with Christ restored? Have you returned to your first love? If none of these happened, maybe there is a conversation you need to have with yourself. With life slowing down and people having more time, how is it you have not come out for the better? Allow this thought to truly come over you and remember, or find out, what the real problem is. Change can only happen when you discover where you truly are, and then God will help you move past your issues and bring you into the fullness of the life He created you to live.

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

René Milner Children's Minister

Love God and Love People

During the past few months we have faced days filled with so much uncertainty. Uncertainty on the best way to stay healthy, the best way to keep others healthy, how long to stay in seclusion, should we stay in seclusion and so many other ideas shared by so many people. As we settled into our routines of social distancing, the world around us seemed to change even more following the deaths of three men. Two in Georgia, the other in Minnesota. These events highlighted the continuing problem of racism in our country. I certainly don't have all the answers to the problem. It breaks my heart daily and confounds my brain as I try to wrap my feelings and thoughts around the actions of others.

On the drive home one day a song I had never heard (or more likely never really paid attention to) was on the radio. A song by Christian music artist Danny Gokey. The song was written by Danny Gokey and Colby Wedgeworth. It was released in 2019. As I listened to the song, five words jumped out at me. "Love God and Love People." I am working hard each day to try and keep to these simple words. After all, it is a shortened version of what Jesus told us to do when he instructed us to "love our neighbor as we love ourselves." If we truly love others, we will help bring the needed changes.

Below is the chorus of the Danny Gokey song that I now listen to daily.

**Gotta keep it real simple
Keep it real simple
Bring everything right back to ground zero
'Cause it all comes down to this
Love God and love people
We're living in a world that keeps breakin'
But if we want to find a way to change it
It all comes down to this
Love God and love people
Keep on loving, keep on loving
Love God and love people
So keep on loving, keep on loving
It's all about love
It's how we change the world
Love God and love people**

Jess Wilbanks Minister of Senior Adults

Our little boy, Atticus just turned TWO. Lots of things are happening in the life of our toddler, language development, learning to obey and share feelings; he has a strong sense of independence, and feels compelled to climb everything. We just removed the front rail from his crib and potty training is in progress.

Many bibles have concordances in the back as a resource, I find myself looking for words and then finding reminders of God's faithfulness in the margins of the pages in my bible. The word *Peace* has 20 or so scriptures referenced. In the midst of fear and uncertainty, with sickness and unrest looming, I've been intentionally pursuing peace. I've been taking time to read passages and understand the surrounding verses, they've encouraged me and have also equipped me for circumstances and phone calls when others needed encouragement. In the Old Testament, there are a few places where *Peace Sacrifices* are made to the Lord.

It seems peace isn't passive; it requires action. I also found it interesting how Zechariah writes about the Lord *guiding our feet in the way of peace* (Luke 1:79). I've been considering how these passages show us there's work to do, on our part, in the realm of peace. We must pray and posture ourselves to have peace, to plan, to work toward peace. Would you join me in praying for peace, but also seeking it out and sharing with others?

Love You, PBC!

-Jess

