



RUHL'S CHURCH NEWSLETTER

WEEKEND EDITION

August 7, 2020

"Thinking Out Loud" by Rev. Blaine R. Wenger

"The Watched Pot"

You have all heard the phrase, "The watched pot never boils." At least, most have, I would guess. This past week, I experienced this same idea in a different way, "The watched tomato never ripens." For quite some time, we had been watching tomatoes flower, set and grow to pretty nice size. But, as vacation got closer, it seemed that those tomatoes would never ripen. I wanted to take some along to the beach, but they didn't want to cooperate. When we returned, there they were! We picked a large container full of tomatoes; regular tomatoes, cherry tomatoes and this odd grape tomato my parents got us turned on to. Before we left, there were flowers on the eggplant, and maybe the start of one. When we get back, there were a couple almost ready to pick. When we left, there were some baby peppers, now there are multiple peppers, growing, turning colors, ready when we are. The basil that had been trimmed back is flourishing and starting to go to seed, and on and on. Before we left, we had a growing garden. We were harvesting squash and zucchini and herbs. Now, we have a producing garden. Lots of things are coming out of the garden. Did it make a difference that we weren't right there watching? No, of course not. What we got was a different perspective.

When it comes to faith, many who are serious in wanting to grow can find themselves feeling frustrated. It can seem for all their good intentions, for all their effort, there is very little growth, or very little fruit to show for it. In reality, if one is working at their faith, digging into God's word, striving after Jesus, it is likely that there is growth. The person who is striving and struggling may simply be too close to see it. They may be too focused to appreciate the changes that are happening. Step back. Don't stop what you are doing; praying, reading God's word, meditating, fasting, serving, worshipping etc., but don't dwell on the results. Live in the moment. Fully experience what you are doing, and allow yourself to enjoy, and engage in the world around you. Relax a bit. After a while, take stock of where you are, and how you are, you may be pleasantly surprised to find that while you were busy practicing your faith, and living life to the full, that God was at work and you are stronger and more "fruitful" than you remembered or realized.

I remember when I was in Middle School. We had to do science projects. One year, I was testing to see how different fertilizer combinations affected plant growth, using tomato plants ironically enough. Water and fertilizer were applied regularly, according to a schedule. Every day, I would measure the growth of

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REMINDER

[CLICK HERE](#) if you missed the Early Edition of the newsletter sent through email on Monday for information regarding:

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Align Life Ministry

Manheim Food Pantry

Prayer Opportunities

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the plants. From day to day, it was often very hard to discern any growth. Sometimes, the measurement was the same as the day before. When I was recording growth, some of the time no doubt, my measurement was generous, rounding with the tape measure to show some growth. But when you looked back over results; when you looked at a bigger picture, you could definitely see progress. Look back a week and clearly there was growth. Look back a couple weeks, or as the experiment progressed, look back over even a month and the growth was noticeable.

It turns out that the watched tomato grows or ripens, it is just very hard to see – from our perspective, and with our patience I might add. The sincere heart that seeks after Jesus, the mind that would be filled with, and would understand him, the life that would be changed by him; will find, be filled, will produce fruit. You just might need a slightly different vantage point from which to perceive such things. Don't despair. Keep at it. The reward is worth the wait.

Grace & Peace, Pastor Blaine

THIS WEEK IN WORSHIP

This Week In Worship we will be looking at another story of Jesus. Our text is Matthew 14:22-33, Jesus walks on water. It is a remarkable story, not just because of what Jesus did, but because he says “yes” to Peter wanting to do as he was doing, and Peter did, briefly, walk on water. We are going to try to understand a bit how we might follow Jesus' example. Read the passage ahead of time and spend some time meditating on it in advance of Sunday. Then, come ready to worship and to be blessed.

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