

May 2017 Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends at St. Boniface,

If we are committed to making decisions in our own lives and in the church according to God's will, then we need to be familiar with God's will as it is expressed in the Bible. We will want to internalize the Word of God so that it informs all that we think and say and do. To better understand what God is trying to say to you through his Word, every time you read a Bible passage you can ask these questions: 1) What is God saying in this passage? 2) What is God saying to me in this passage? and finally, 3) What is God asking me to do in this passage?

For instance, take a passage from the book of 2nd Peter as paraphrased in Eugene Peterson's *The Message*. Peter is addressing Christians who are facing opposition from the world, and he warns them against the false teachers within their fellowship who would lead them into incorrect belief. Peter writes:

"Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who invited us to God. The best invitation we ever received! We were also given absolutely terrific promises to pass on to you - your tickets to participation in the life of God after you turned your back on a world corrupted by lust. So don't lose a minute in building on what you've been given, complementing your basic faith with good character, spiritual understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness, and generous love, each dimension fitting into and developing the others. With these qualities active and growing in your lives, no grass will grow under your feet, no day will pass without its reward as you mature in your experience of our Master Jesus. Without these qualities you can't see what's right before you, oblivious that your old sinful life has been wiped off the books." (2 Peter 1: 3-9)

What Peter is saying is that we have been given a new life in Christ, and we are supposed to build upon that gift by developing in ourselves the qualities of character, understanding, discipline, patience, wonder, friendliness, and love. Notice especially the adjectives that Peter uses to describe each of these qualities: *good* character, *spiritual* understanding, *alert* discipline, *passionate* patience, *reverent* wonder, *warm* friendliness, and *generous* love.

I encourage each of you to take the time to ponder the implications of each of these terms. Notice how these qualities are dependent upon each other. What do you have to do to develop each of these characteristics? What would it mean for us as individuals and for our faith community if each of us were committed to developing these traits in our lives?

Faithfully in Christ,

Rev. Carol +
The Rev. Carol Blaine

