

FAITH THAT WORKS

September 2, 2018

Pentecost 15

[James 1:17-27](#)

(prayer)

- Look at picture on screen - the gardener is in their own little world. They are working (maybe even for others eventually when the harvest comes), but they are isolated.
- (examples of *doing things* for good... or not so much)
- Monty Python: *Life of Brian* - "this calls for immediate discussion".
<https://youtu.be/YawaqQ6lLrA> "It's perfectly simple: all you've got to do is to go out of that door now and try to stop the Romans nailing him up!"
- Monty Python: *Life of Brian* - "we are not, in fact, the rescue committee".
<https://youtu.be/tRJlo2WRDbw> (at the 2:25 mark). I love the part where they hold an impromptu *show of hands* vote to decide whether or not to sing *For He's Jolly Good Fellow*.
- [Last week](#), I preached about certain discussions that were held at the United Church's General Council meeting this summer: honest discussions about how truly welcoming the church is and how it is coming to terms with less than admirable aspects of the church's history.
- Discussions are ultimately empty unless they lead to action. Apologies are hollow unless they are lived out.
- Actions always define us more than our words.
- Jesus: "*Woe to the hypocrites!*"
- From James' letter today: "*Welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers.*" (Jms1:22-23)
- The James text offers some examples of what *doing the word* includes:
 - acting generously,
 - being a patient listener: one who holds their tongue and avoids acting out of anger,
 - care for the vulnerable,
 - avoiding the pitfall of selfishly living only for the moment (the way I interpret *keeping oneself unstained by the world*).
- **Doing The Word - A Summary:**
 - **Be Generous over Selfish**
 - **Listen over Anger**
 - **Protecting and Supporting the Vulnerable**
- (ad lib)
- It is great to have a faith that is humble.
- It is great to have a faith that is curious.
- It is great to have a faith that is studious.
- It is great to have a faith that you enjoy sharing with friends.
- It is great to have a faith that prays and sings and sits in meditative silence. But...
- It is **beyond great** to have a *faith that works*.
- //
- Sit in awe and wonder for all of the miraculous handiwork of your God.
- Study and grow your faith in heart, mind and soul.
- Spend time with fellow travellers on your road of faith. Enjoy the community that church can offer.

Rev. T. Blaine Gregg

- Share your story with that strange mix of confidence and humility.
- But... above all, find and take opportunities to live out your faith by making the life of someone else better. Bring the god-given dignity each person deserves into focus through your words and actions.
- Be the hands and feet and heart of Jesus in the world today.
- Have a faith that works!

//

Let us pray:

Generous God,

Open our lives to be guided by the love of Christ. Amen.

offering

Rev. T. Blaine Gregg