

2010

JANUARY 2010... CIVIL DISCOURSE



Church
in Bethesda
SUNDAY #3
JANUARY 17, '10

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN
HALLOWED BE THY NAME
THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN
GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD
AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE
WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US
LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION
BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL
FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM
AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY
FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.

Philippians 2:1-4, page 804

*“Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. **Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.**”*

We begin with a few verses from Paul that I know I have been guilty of underestimating... an explanation of how our mutual love and compassion can become affirming of one another's personhood when each of us is sincerely invested in the other's **interests**.

There's not a Greek equivalent of "interests" here in Phil. 2:4... what we have is a contrast of possessives, **mine** and **yours**, one's own, and another's. My first prerogative, according to Paul, is not mine, but yours.

I like the use of the word interests, because it really captures what it means to be present and engaged with another person. We know how important it is to have our interests validated, how good it feels and how empowering it is. So we spend a lot of time getting our own interests validated and we forget the power we can wield in validating others.

Welcome!

~ Opening Prayer,
Scripture Reading
Phil. 2:1-4, page 804

~ As The Deer, pg. 2
~ Your Grace Is
Enough, pg. 11
~ Doxology, pg. 5

~ Being Civil

~ I Will Rise, pg. 12
~ Welcome to the Table

~ Prayers of the People

~ Weekly Grace

~ It Is Well With My
Soul, pg. 561 in
the Blue Hymnal

~Closing Blessing

So, what do we do?

We affirm our love and unity. Truth is, we just don't do this enough. I love you. I love who you are and what you do. It's not just squishy love that makes us blush, but really stopping and looking at the other and saying, "Yes." Yes, you are worthy and valuable. Yes, you are welcome in my world. *Yes, your concerns, cares and interests are important to me.*

We get serious about safety. We welcome the other to speak, without judgment and condemnation. Watch those hands! Watch those eyes! Make the space for the other to be real and open with you. *Give the gift of safety, sincerely. No time limits. No limitations. No snap judgments. No easy labels.*

We ask questions. It's the oldest counseling skill in the book. Ask clarifying questions and listen. My position on something from taxes to Gay Marriage to speeding ticket cameras is simply an expression, an idea, a conclusion. What you need from me is to know what my "interests" are... what's the interior movement in my life and soul that brings me to any conclusion. Why do this? *Because we don't know one another's hearts, and we need to stop acting like we do.*

We value the discourse itself, not the win. Non-competitive discourse isn't overly concerned with persuasion. You're being asked to value something that no other species in all God's creation has been made able to do: **discourse**.

Ephesians 4:15
"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ."

Over all this we breathe...

**"Jesus Christ,
Son of the
Living God,
Have mercy
on me,
a sinner."**

5th Century
Egyptian Desert
Luke 18:10-14

God breathes life into humanity.

People "breathe their last."
God's breath drives wind and waves.
Job and God's Spirit & breath.
Life itself is but a breath.
Idols are seen to have no breath.

Jesus breathes on his disciples.

Jesus' breath overthrows injustice.
Scripture is "God-breathed."

Breath and prayer.

Centering prayer.
Jesus Prayer.