

Sunday October 17, 2021

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Pastor Matthias Krier

Message Where There is No Vision, the People Will Perish

Every time I pray the Lord's Prayer, there is something different that will grab my attention, IF and I mean IF, I pause long enough to actually listen to these words. Most of the time, however, many of us are guilty of just saying this prayer without really listening to the voice of God or at the very least, that inner voice that says we need to listen to whichever part is speaking to us.

Maybe this young man when praying was thinking of the part of the Lord's Prayer where it says: *"forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."*



It is true, *"to err is human, to forgive, divine,"* and forgive we must. True forgiveness however, even by the grace of God, is hard work and a topic for another sermon.

Last month at the Ad Council, I asked them to consider an envisioning team that would put together a vision statement for Aldersgate United

Methodist Church. This is not to be confused with the Mission Statement which is printed every Sunday in your bulletin as a reminder of who we are called to be on a day to day basis.

Let's read our mission statement together: just the first part for now. Let us read these words together:

Mission Statement

Welcome home to Aldersgate,
A community growing in Christ
Led by the Holy Spirit:

The church is making explicit that everyone is welcome here and this can be your church home if you choose to make it so. The church is making it explicit that we expect to grow in Christ and be led by the Holy Spirit. Let us share in these words together:

Welcoming to all,
Gathering in relationship to inspire and nurture a
Spirit of compassion, and
Serving each other, the community and the world,
Wherever there is need.

Welcoming, gathering and serving wherever there is need! This is a positive mission statement that calls us to not only to be inspired, but to nurture with a Spirit of compassion those who are in need!

In addition to this mission statement is an affirmation of everyone who may be different from the status quo. When this was formulated some years ago, it was entitled a Welcoming Statement. Let us read the paragraph you see on screen together:

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Welcoming Statement

Aldersgate UMC affirms that all are made in the

image of God, having sacred worth and dignity.
Each person has a unique story, whether it is by
Circumstance or choice. With many gifts and
Passions, we come, as we are, to journey together
Following Jesus Christ.

Beautiful! Each person is made in the image of God!

Each person is of sacred worth and dignity!

I believe that the good folks of Aldersgate are striving to welcome individuals from all walks of life! In many ways, this church is an open and affirming congregation stretching to include everyone at the table and for that I am deeply grateful!

Now with all that said, I believe wholeheartedly that not only does this church need a *Mission Statement*, it also needs a *Vision Statement* of who this church is called to be and what this church is called to do in this decade and beyond!

This past week many if not most of you received an email with an attachment about the difference between a Mission Statement and a Vision Statement. True? Raise your hands if you received this. Okay, now raise your hands if you have read it.

I have said on numerous occasions, if this church wants *to thrive and not just survive* it needs to envision who we are called to be and what we are called to do in the years to come, for we know that:



Every organization whether it be a church or a business does not THRIVE without a Vision!

What better vision for the church than to take these words from Yeshua and discover the Vision for this church. What does it mean or what does it look like when we pray these words: *“thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”*

This seems like too lofty of a Vision, to actually believe that we could somehow bring God’s kingdom and God’s will to earth!

How in the world could this be possible?

Yes, by the Grace of God!

Not only are we dependent on the Grace of God, we need to take the next step in our discipleship. Last week, we talked about moving from disciples to apostles, from followers to leaders:

Followers (*Disciples*) **to** **Leaders (*Apostles*)**
Faith in Jesus **to** **Faith of Jesus**

The biggest difference between disciples and apostles is that apostles possess a qualitatively different kind of faith than disciples. Disciples have **faith in Jesus**. Apostles, on the other hand, have the **faith of Jesus**. Otherwise, there’s no way apostles could do what Jesus did.

Dream Like Jesus by Rebekah Simon-Peter

The disciples who became the apostles of Jesus could never have been so courageous and so bold to witness to their faith as they did unless they somehow developed the faith **of Jesus**. I believe that they did so, at least in part, because of the Lord's Prayer.

Unfortunately, something has been lost in translation from the Aramaic, Yeshua's native tongue.

Abwoon d'bashmaya	Our Father which art in heaven
Neth Qadash shmakh	Hallowed be thy name
Teytey malkuhakh	Thy kingdom come

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Nehwey tzevyanach aykanna d'bwashmaya aph b'arha
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

As many of you, I pray the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic because I feel closer to Yeshua in speaking his native tongue. I know very little of this prayer in its original form and actually learned a Syriac version of the Aramaic. Even though I may not be pronouncing every syllable correctly, this prayer has somehow helped me in ways I had not thought possible.

Now I believe it is important to share a few words of the Aramaic now translated into English from Neil Douglas-Klotz's book "*Prayers of the Cosmos*" to somehow get the fullness of what is not said in English.

Hear just a portion of this translation and just how expansive this phrase is from the Aramaic Teytey malkuthakh into English: Thy kingdom come:

Create your reign of unity now --
Through our fiery hearts and willing hands
Let your counsel rule our lives
Clearing our intention for co-creation.

We are indeed co-creators with God and we have to ask ourselves, or at least I ask myself: “Am I a part of the problem or am I a part of the solution of what is happening here on planet earth?”

And then from “thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”:

Nehwey tzevyanach aykanna d’bwashmaya aph b’arha

Listen how much more expansive the Aramaic is when translated into English:

*Your one desire then acts with ours,
As in all light, so in all forms.
Let all wills move together
In your vortex, as stars and planets
Swirl through the sky
Help us love beyond our ideals
And sprout acts of compassion
For all creatures.
As we find your love in ours
Let heaven and nature form
A new creation.*

Once again we hear about God’s agape love, God’s unconditional love that can flow through us as we co-create with God. We will continue to explore what this means as we envision who we are called to be and what we are called to do in the years to come.

While much of what was meant in the Aramaic may be lost in translation into English, may we somehow find these words in this music, in this song we are about to hear in preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Let us pray: Oh gracious God of love, empower us this day and everyday to move from discipleship to apostleship in who we are called to be and what we are called to do. Ame n.