

It doesn't feel like Sunday.

Somehow, when I'm not in a church on Sunday, whether in the pulpit or in a pew, there is something important missing from my life.

- I miss the fellowship, the music, and the sermon.
- Hold on a second, I can do something about the sermon, but if that's not one of the things you miss, then it's time to stop reading this page. 😊
- So, you're still reading? Wonderful.
- It's probably appropriate to stop reading this and read the scripture passage noted at the top of the page. ... I'll wait.
- And you don't have to stand. I see you are already sitting. Good.
(cleaning my glasses)
- Finished? You're a fast reader.
- As you noted, the passage is about a man who was born blind and received his sight.
- And in verse 7, Jesus tells him to "Go wash...."
- Who hasn't heard those words "Go wash" at least 10 times today?
- It has been suggested that the origins of denominations occurred when the healed blind men met each other.
- At first, they were all excited about the miracle of sight that Jesus had given them, but as they talked about how Jesus had healed them, they began to discover some significant differences.
- For some, the healing came with simply a touch from Jesus (See Matt. 9:29, and 20:34).
- But another meekly exclaimed that Jesus not only touched him twice, he also "spit on his eyes" in order for him to see clearly (Mark 8:23)
- The final one really felt embarrassed to admit that even though a touched wasn't part of his healing, Jesus "Spit" wasn't enough.
- Jesus had mixed his saliva with dirt and put the mud on his eyes, then told him to go and wash in a pool of water (John 9:6-7).
- Since each one thought his healing was normal and better than the others, they divided into
 - + spittites and non-spittites
 - + muddites and non-muddites
 - + touchites and non-touchites
- and Denominations were born.

- Well. That story may not be exactly true, but it does point out the problem that many of us have, when someone suggests doing things differently than we done it before.
- We all find security in the tried and true methods.
- Methods which worked in the past surely will continue to work.
- If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
- "You know the rule, rules are there for a reason, don't go breaking them,"
is probably what the Pharisees were saying to Jesus about his healing on the Sabbath.
- But what happens if the situation changes?
- Buggy whips didn't change, but those who manufactured them did, because the transportation people started using did.

- The rules I set for my children:
 - + Be in bed by 10 PM
 - + Have your homework done

- No longer seem to apply now that they are out of school and have children of their own. Of course, we can't go breaking all the rules, even the ones that we don't like....that would be asking for chaos to ensue.
 - But Jesus broke the law, even as he said, *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (Matt 5:19)*
 - So what standard did Jesus use to break the law this day?
(cleaning my glasses)
- I went back in my files to answer this one for a 21 year-old news article,
(I just knew there would come a time when I would use this)

After 63 years, Wheeler B. Lipes was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for his acts of bravery during WW II.

- Lipes was the pharmacist's mate on the Seadragon, a submarine patrolling the South China Sea. It was Sept. 1942.
 - Lipes and company were 120 ft. below the Pacific, when Lipes was approached by a 19 yr. old sailor, Darrel Dean Rector.
 - + "Hey Doc," Rector said, "I don't feel too good."
 - Rector soon began to display the classic symptoms of acute appendicitis.
 - There was a problem though.
 - _ There was no doctor on board the sub, or anywhere nearby.
 - While Lipes, in his capacity as pharmacist's mate, had seen one or two appendectomies performed, he certainly was no doctor himself.
 - Rector's life hung in the balance.
 - The commanding officer asked Lipes if he could do the surgery.
 - "Yes" Lipes reluctantly replied.
 - The operating room was strictly makeshift.
 - They had no surgical supplies and no antibiotics.
 - Rector was too tall to fit on their makeshift table, so they opened the drawer of a nearby cabinet and rested Rector's feet on that.
 - Lipes and his assistants dressed in pajamas because they had no surgical gowns.
 - For anesthesia, they used ether poured on a tea strainer lined with gauze.
 - The crew held the ship steady as Lipes retracted the infected appendix with an ordinary table spoon.
 - The appendix was 2/3 gangrenous.
 - Lipes cut it off and sterilized the area with alcohol milked from one of the torpedoes and a couple of ground up sulfa tablets.
 - Amazingly, Rector made a full recovery and was back on duty in a matter of days.
 - A newspaper report about the surgery won the Pulitzer Prize.
 - Several movies were made of Lipes' experience, including one by the Navy.
 - But Lipes himself tended to get grief for his efforts.
 - The Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and a lot of its doctors were very upset about his actions.
 - One doctor tried to hit him.
 - Another doctor told him it would have been better to let Rector die.
 - At least neither Lipes nor Rector were run out of town for the unorthodox healing, as were Jesus and the man born blind.
 - Miraculous healings don't happen to everyone.
 - We wish they did.
- Sometimes healing is spiritual or emotional rather than physical.
- Sometimes the healing comes in death, but that's the hardest one for us to see.
 - But back to the point of telling this story.

- I think it illustrates why Jesus broke the religious rule of working on the Sabbath.
 - Jesus put people lives as being more important than rules.
 - To the woman who was condemned to death and about to be stoned,
After he stopped the stoning from happening, he told her, "*Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?*" 11 "*No one, Lord,*" she answered. "*Then neither do I condemn you,*" Jesus declared. "*Now go and sin no more.*" (John 8:11)
 - To the condemned thief on the cross, "*Today you shall be with me in paradise*" (Lk 23:43)
 - He touched lepers and unclean women"
 - He put people first before the Law.
 - Compassion and forgiveness were and still are the hallmarks of our Lord.
 - And must be the hallmark of we who call ourselves Christian.
 - Let us not be blind, but aware of those who are suffering because of rules and procedures.
 - You've heard stories written about them
 - You've seen crowd-funding efforts trying to help them
 - You may even know some of those who are suffering.
 - What does the still, small voice of the Christ in you say you can do?
 - He who has ears, let him hear.
 - She who has eyes, let her see.
(cleaning my glasses)
- And all the people said, "... (fill in the blank) !

Benediction:

Lord, thank you that we are a family in Christ. Help us to share his with everyone that we encounter this week. May we lavish Christ's abounding goodness upon our families, friends and neighbors. May we be your hands and feet to the needy, your words of affirmation to the oppressed and your arms of comfort to the lonely. Thank you for choosing to use us to bring your kingdom here on earth. Amen.