

Weightier Matters
Thursday, May 06, 2010

This morning as I was having quiet time, I was struck by what Jesus is saying in the gospel of Matthew. In the twenty third chapter, in the twenty third verse he tells the religious leaders, "How terrible for you! You are hypocrites! You give to God one -tenth of everything you earn - even your mint, dill, and cumin. But you don't obey the really important teachings of the law - justice, mercy, and being loyal. These are the things you should do, as well as those other things (New Century Version)."

In this, Jesus is not putting down tithing. He is reminding the religious leaders of his day that they should not forget the really important items that God wants us to be involved in as well. He is reminding them (and us) that God wants us to be involved in issues of justice, of mercy and of being loyal to God.

It certainly got me thinking, what are the important things that I might be forgetting about in life and in ministry? What about you?

It is certainly easy to get caught up in the everyday issues of life. It is easy to get caught up in taking care of details of meeting deadlines and getting tasks done. We often give attention to those things that are urgent in life. And they need attention (that is why they are urgent). But if we are not careful, we can run from one urgent task to another urgent task and ignore some of the more important things in life.

A couple of weeks ago, my daughter Natalie stopped by to visit me at the church office. We hadn't seen each other in a while. I was working on stuff at the church. When she came into my office, I found myself distracted by what I was working on and wanting to get back to.

But then I realized that Natalie was getting ready to leave town and I wasn't going to see her for a week or so. All of a sudden it hit me, the most important thing I could do in that moment was to attend to my relationship with my daughter. I allowed my mind to focus on her and on our conversation. We visited for twenty minutes or so. We hugged when it came time for her to go. Amazingly, I was able to slide right back into the work that was waiting for me.

As I got back to work on that day, I was reminded of how grateful I was that in that moment I had focused on what was most important, my relationship with Natalie. Today's scripture reminds me that I need to keep asking, what are the important things of life and ministry that I might be forgetting? It reminds me to pause and take stock. It reminds me to be careful when I run from one urgent task to the next, to not forget what is important.

May God help us stay focused on what is important in life.

In the hope Jesus offers us,

Rev. Scott Carlson

The Mission of Sun Prairie United Methodist Church is to invite and welcome people to be committed and compassionate followers of Jesus Christ through worship, through spiritual growth, through fellowship and through service to others.