

**SERENITY
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
JUNE 12, 2010**

Last week, the message was about how to control our anger; how to identify the triggers and to control the outcome. We know it is our decision. The Bible says “Be angry, but don’t sin”.

This week, we will go one step further, and discuss the importance of Serenity. This was the topic of my first CGI sermon on April 6, 1991 in New Orleans.

We all know the Serenity Prayer, but there may be some things here you have not heard. I know I learned some new information.

The "Serenity Prayer" is one of the most well-known prayers of our time. It is the common name for a prayer originally written by theologian Reinhold Niebuhr in the late 1930s to early 1940s. Research suggests that Niebuhr wrote the prayer for as part of a sermon he was giving.

... there is some controversy as to whether Niebuhr was the original author or not,

The Serenity Prayer became much more widely known in the 1950s after it was adopted by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). In 1950, the AA Grapevine, a popular AA magazine, also named Niebuhr as the author, and the current Alcoholics Anonymous website identifies Niebuhr as the prayer's originator. The Serenity Prayer has also been used in Narcotics Anonymous and other Twelve-step programs.

Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

**(Although known most widely in its abbreviated form above,
the entire prayer reads as follows, and I did not know this:)**

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
Forever in the next.
Amen.

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The Full Original Copy of the Serenity Prayer
by Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)

God, give us grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.
Amen.

I like the original better than the revision.

We are to:

- ***Be prepared! Be productive! Serve others!***
- ***And always remember who is really in control!***

But, how do we do that and obtain serenity?

Psalm 46:

- 7 The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge.
- 8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has made desolations in the earth.
- 9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire.
- 10 **Be still, and know that I am God;** I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!
- 11 The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Many times in our lives, we forget to “be still”. We are too busy pushing a string. We try too hard to make things happen – the way we want it to happen and in the timeframe we want.

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Acts 16:

- 6 Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.

Sometimes, God's Spirit will prevent us from doing what we think we should be doing.

Acts 20:

- 22 "And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there,

And, sometimes, God's Spirit will lead us to do something even though we don't know why or what lies in store for us.

Matthew 6:

- 25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"
- 26 "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"
- 27 "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?"
- 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? **Consider the lilies of the field,** how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;
- 29 "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
- 30 "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"
- 31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"
- 32 "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.
- 33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
- 34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

“Don't Worry – Be Happy”

Isaiah 55:

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- 2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.
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- 8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.
- 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.
- 10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater,
- 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.
- 12 "For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
- 13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; And it shall be to the LORD for a name, For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

God's way is one of unity and diversity

- Motivational Gifts = serving; administration
- Ministry Gifts = Apostles, Prophets, Teachers
- Manifestation Gifts = Miracles, Healings, Tongues, Interpretation

Psalm 139:

- 1 O LORD, You have searched me and known me.
- 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.
- 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways.
- 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.
- 5 You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.
- 7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?
- 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

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- 9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
- 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.
- 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me;
- 12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.
- 13 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.
- 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.
- 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
- 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.

God has a perfect knowledge of man – our emotions, our pain, our sorrow, our wishes, our desires, and our intent.

In a quote from the movie *A Man Called Peter*, Peter Marshall says “God plants His own lovely dream in the human heart, and, when the dream is mature and the time is right for its fulfillment, well, to our astonishment and delight, then His will becomes ours and ours His. Now, who, but God, could have thought of anything as perfect as this?”

A horse runs with blinders on to keep him from being distracted by the other horses in the race or by other movements.

Acts 9:

- 1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest
- 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.
- 3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.
- 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"
- 5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. **It is hard for you to kick against the goads.**"

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- 6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."
- 7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.
- 8 Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.
- 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Be still – and know what God has in store for you!

James Allen, in his book “As A Man Thinketh” writes:

“Calmness of mind is one of the beautiful jewels of wisdom. It is the result of long and patient effort in self-control. Its presence is an indication of ripened experience, and of a more than ordinary knowledge of the laws and operations of thought. ... The calm man, having learned how to govern himself, knows how to adapt to others ... The more tranquil a man becomes, the greater is his success, his influence, his power for good. ... It does not matter whether it rains or shines, or what changes come to those possessing these blessings, for they are always sweet, serene and calm. ... How insignificant mere money-seeking looks in comparison with a serene life – a life that dwells in the ocean of Truth, beneath the waves, beyond the reach of tempests, in the Eternal Calm! ... How many people we know who sour their lives, who ruin all that is sweet and beautiful by explosive tempers, who destroy their poise of character, and make bad blood! It is a question whether the great majority of people do not ruin their lives and mar their happiness by lack of self-control. How few people we meet in life who are well-balanced, who have that exquisite poise which is characteristic of the finished character!?”

Nehemiah 8:

- 9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.
- 10 Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our LORD. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."
- 11 So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved."

Psalms 46:

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- 10 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

Listen again to the words of the Serenity Prayer – the original version.

God, give us grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.
Amen.

Philippians 4:

- 8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.
- 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Peace; be still!