

SERMON THEMES AND SCRIPTURE SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2014

September 21 Natalia

Title: **Offensive Love**

Jonah 3:10-4:11; Matthew 20:1-16

There are very few stories that better encapsulate the radical love God has for us than the Jonah text and the Matthew text for today. Jonah preaches history's shortest sermon and an entire city repents - and radical love and grace is shown to the Ninevites. In Matthew, Jesus shares a story of a handful of workers who show up late to the game and still win the day. This is radical stuff and God is still at work today in these same radical ways!

September 28 Confirmation Sunday Brent

Compilation sermon taken from faith essays.

October 5 Chad

Title: **Failing the Jesus Quiz**

(Use these readings from last week)

Psalms 25:1-9 and Matthew 21:23-32)

The religious experts thought they had trapped Jesus with their question until Jesus answered with a question of his own. They didn't dare answer His question so Jesus gave them a second chance with a new question. This time they slammed down the buzzer because they were positive they had the answer. It turns out that being correct is not always what it's cracked up to be.

October 12 Natalia

Title: **Open Invitation**

Text: Matthew 22:1-14, Phil 4:1-9

Studies show that when you invite people to a wedding, about 80% of those who receive an invitation will actually attend. Usually people send regrets because they are too far away, or have a prior commitment, and it's a bummer, but the bride and groom understand. In today's Gospel, the King invites a lot of people to his wedding party, but his reaction to those who do not attend is pretty extreme. Let's try to figure out what Jesus is trying to teach by using this parable of the wedding banquet.

October 19 Chad (kick off to 5 week stewardship series)

Title: **Living Generously**

Psalms 96:1-9, Matthew 22:15-22

Today we will begin a five-week series focused on experiencing the profound blessing of living generously. Each week we will watch a short dramatic film as we follow one family's journey toward the abundant life Jesus came to give. This is an "all-in" moment here at POP, so commit to participating in this transformational experience by attending worship each week and participating in one of our GroupLife discussion groups for this five week period.

October 26 Chad (Reformation Sunday)

Title: **3 Big Ideas**

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 3:19-28; John 8:31-36

In this Reformation Sunday message we will explore Luther's three big ideas that sparked the reformation and continue to shape the church to this day. These three ideas also have the power to bless and change your life in profound ways.

November 2 Natalia (All Saints, but use Lectionary text)

Title: **A Slice of Humble Pie**

Text: Matthew 23:1-12, 1 Thess 2:9-13

One of my favorite quotes from one of my favorite authors (Glennon Melton) is "I'm confident because I'm a child of God, but I'm humble because everyone else is too." What does it mean to be humble? What does it mean to be a servant and put ourselves last? How can we adopt the posture of servanthood that Jesus speaks of in today's Gospel, and that we hear about in today's film clip?

November 9 Chad

Title: **What We Build**

Amos 5:18-24, Matthew 25:1-13 (might change text)

Where do you turn for comfort and security in times of fear and uncertainty? You are answering that question a little bit every day. Living generously is building a fortress of faith which will not be shaken in troubled times. Ray calls it his "tower of strength" in today's film segment.

November 16 Chad

Title: **Security Deposit**

Galatians 6:1-10, Matthew 25:14-30

Today we watch the fifth and final episode of the Living Generously film series. The film does a great job of illustrating the truth of today's gospel reading. When we trust God enough to live generously, life really gets interesting!

November 23 Natalia (Christ the King)

Title: **Least of These**

Text: Matthew 25:31-46, Ezekiel 34:11-16

We've just spent 5 weeks learning about living generously, and now we are challenged once again, but this time by Jesus. The world will be divided into those who helped the least, and those who did not. So which one are you? Are you a sheep or a goat?

November 30 Chad (Advent 1)

(ask the band to do Awake My Soul, & maybe People Get Ready)

Title: **People Get Ready**

Isaiah 64:1-9, Mark 13:24-37

The world has begun the countdown to Christmas everywhere but in the church. Happy carols play in the malls where blinking lights and tinsel are on sale. But here in the church there is talk of the stars falling and the heavens shaking. No wonder most people visit shopping malls more than they visit churches in this season. On the other hand, we are not

in the happiness business here in the church. We are more interested in giving people deep and abiding joy. These things never go on sale.

December 7 Natalia (Advent 2)

Title: **Prepare**

Text: Isaiah 40:1-11, Mark 1:1-8 (I'm aiming to focus more on Isaiah)

Today we hear about preparations that we do to make way for Jesus. In today's Gospel, John comes reminding people to repent (metanoia) and be baptized. But in Isaiah, after we are told to prepare, we are told what is coming - and it's not what we are expecting.

December 14 (Advent 3) **Christmas Pageants**

December 21 (Advent 4) **Cantata** (one service 10am)

December 24 Chad

Title: **Home for Christmas**

Isaiah 9:2-7, Titus 2:11-14, Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

No festival of the church is loaded with more sentimentality and tradition than Christmas. Millions of people have made every effort to get back home for Christmas. *I'll be home for Christmas, you can plan on me* says a favorite Christmas carol. Yet, even that carol hints at the fact that home can be a difficult place to arrive as it concludes, *if only in my dreams*. On this holy night, we will find our way home.

December 28 Natalia (One 10am service)

Title: **Strange Blessings**

Text: Luke 2:22-40, Galatians 4:4-7

Today Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the temple and they receive some unexpected and strange words of blessing. This text could be filed under "things not to say to new parents" but that doesn't hold anyone back today. Today we look more closely at this strange blessing and listen for what it might mean to us today as we come down off of our own "Christmas high."
(Blessing of gifts, etc)

