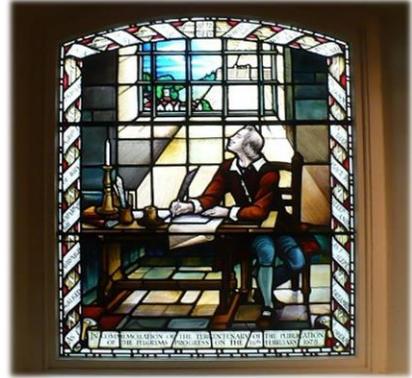


August 13, 2020

Good morning, Everybody.

Thursdays here at our house almost always begin with one of my most looked-forward-to jobs of the week. This is going to sound pretty earthy. I almost hesitate to tell it, but I guess you'll understand (smile). Maybe you actually feel the same way about whatever day of the week you, too, have this little job to do. But on our street, Thursdays are trash day. And one of the first things I get to do Thursday mornings is to take our big, grey, wheeled trash can down to the street!



The anticipation of this generally surfaces in my mind at some point on Wednesday. My first reaction tends to be a flash of relief that I'm *remembering* (!) that tomorrow is the day when the trash truck comes. That's because every once in awhile I forget, and whenever I do, it's not an entirely nice experience in our back yard between that day when I forgot the truck and the next pick-up a whole seven days later. Especially at this time of year (you can see why I said that this is kind of earthy).

But on the Wednesdays when it occurs to me that the next day is trash day, I feel relief, and then I just feel a really happy anticipation. There's something about being close to the time when everything nasty and junky will get hauled away (*hauled away!*, is how that sounds inside my brain) that makes me feel really good.

Preachers can very easily make parables out of things like that. I won't do it today, but probably you can on your own (smile).

Our Church Sign

What I *would* like to make something out of is what I saw last night when I went home from prayer meeting. By the way—wasn't that a wonderful service? The presentation was thrilling. And to think that we have missionaries all over the world doing that kind of work: we are abundantly blessed to be partners with all these folks. We can almost certainly assume that *at any hour of any given day*,

there are probably people whom we support who are engaged in ministry of some kind, somewhere in the world at that very moment. Amazing!

Well . . . back to what I saw last night. The last few cars left the parking lot around 10:15. As I drove around front, my attention was arrested by what I'm going to show you. I'll make it as big as I can, because it looked even bigger last night.



The three cars whose headlights are facing you were stopped at the red light. I don't know for how long, but certainly long enough for the drivers' eyes to wander around for something to look at. And if you've ever sat at that intersection at any time of the day, but especially late at night, you know that there's not a lot to catch your attention. Except the church sign.

So here's something that I hope will encourage us as we go about our rather mundane lives day after day after day. We not only have missionaries engaged in ministry of some kind somewhere in the world during any given hour on any given

day, but even while we're sleeping, there's ministry taking place down on our property all through the night, night after night after night. 365 nights a year.

Here's the way Proverbs 8:1-7a describes what is going on with that sign at that intersection all day and all night long.

Does not wisdom call, and understanding lift up her voice?

On top of the heights beside the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand;
Beside the gates at the opening to the city, at the entrance of the doors, she cries out:

*To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.
O naïve ones, understand prudence;
And, O fools, understand wisdom.*

*Listen, for I will speak noble things;
And the opening of my lips will reveal right things.*

For my mouth will utter truth. .

Think of that ministry going on without interruption all the time. On our property. At that intersection. Regardless of which way the cars are traveling. It might be a big encouragement to think of that about 3 p.m. this afternoon when you're pretty well worn out, or in the middle of the night if you work third shift. What you're doing—what we're all doing together—makes round-the-world, every-hour-of-the-day-and-night ministry possible; both on and off our properties. Each of us is making that possible *today*. And again *tonight* after the streets go dark. Praise the Lord!

Praying for You Today,

Pastor Minnick