

A LIFE OF GRATITUDE

SERMON INTERVIEW OF BOB AND MARGIE SNATER
(ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR 59TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY)



Scripture:

Psalm 51:1-12

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. ⁵Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. ⁶You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. ⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. ⁹Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. ¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

These last few weeks we have been talking about our identity as Christians based on the writing of Paul to the church in Ephesus. Last week we added a video that encouraged us to think about you and how you put flesh and blood on the gospel and take it out into the world. Today I want to highlight a couple who embody that idea.

But first a reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians 4:1-7 and 11-16

¹I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

⁷But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.

¹¹The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. ¹⁴We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. ¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!



Bob Snater has written a book entitled: *A Life of Gratitude*. After reading it I asked him and Margie to speak about their life journey and how their faith helped them through struggles and joys. We have Iowa roots in common.

In chapter one, Bob starts out with this quote by Frederick Buechner:

**"Listen to your life.
See it for the fathomless
mystery it is.
In the boredom and pain of it
no less than in the excitement
and gladness: touch, taste, smell,
your way to the hidden heart of it.
Because in the last analysis
all moments are key moments,
and life itself is grace."**

Bob also quoted from Ecclesiastes 11:7-10. (The Living Bible)

⁷It is a wonderful thing to be alive!

⁸If a person lives to be very old, let him rejoice in every day of life, but let him also remember that eternity is far longer and that everything down here is futile in comparison.

⁹Young man, it's wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of it!

Do all you want to; take in everything, but realize that you must account to God for everything you do.

¹⁰So banish grief and pain, but remember that youth, with a whole life before it, can make serious mistakes.

Pastor Cindy asked the Snaters the following questions which they answered.

1. How did you and Margie meet? How do you feel God was part of your early relationship? Tell us briefly about your

early life together. How important has church membership been to you?

2. When did you become a Christian? How has your faith carried you through life? What is your favorite scripture passage? (Describe a few struggles where you leaned on your faith and the church to help you get through). (Both of you speak.)
3. When you think of this stage in your life and your maturity, what wisdom for life do you think God wants you to share with us? (One of you share your thoughts.)
4. Anything else on your heart you want to say?

Bob closed by reading a passage from his book:

“We need to be careful how we carry forward our disappointments and regrets. I have had my share, and I haven’t always handled them with grace. But, I know now that life is a lot more pleasant when the negative messages I have taped and played over and over again in my head, are erased. After all, living with regret has no redeemable value.

“I believe we sense important moments in our lives when changes should be made. These moments occur to all of us. But, some are summoned to action, while others abandon themselves to whatever may happen, and live as buoys on the waves.

This is the “free will” that we have been granted.

“It has been said that the world changes when people no longer accept the places assigned to them. Likewise, our lives change when we reject the status quo and live out the dream of a better life.

“Humorist Will Rogers said, ‘Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there.’

“I have had these dreams and I have acted. Are these urges signs from a higher power, or are they the freedom we have been given to make our own decisions? This is the great theological question of our lives.

“I believe all of us face obstacles and opportunities throughout life. How attuned we are to the inner voice that provides these messages makes all the difference in their outcome.

“But, our lives do not run on level ground. We meet tunnels, valleys and mountains, disappointments, sadness, and dead ends. But, we also have times of true joy, of great satisfaction and accomplishment, meaningful friendships, the love of immediate family members, and the discovery of the beauty that surrounds us. This is life. Thank God for it.”

I think everyone should write a book about their lives and get a few copies self published to give out to family and friends. All of your lives are so interesting and the way your faith has woven in and out and through the years holding you together is inspiring. I hope you might consider it.

Your family will benefit from it, too, especially when it is time for them to write up your obituary and eulogy.

I have so far learned of other authors in our congregation who have written autobiographies: Helen MacKenzie, Ray Alden and Rit Anderson. Are there others? Think about it. Especially those of you from the "Greatest Generation" have a lot to teach us about the hardships you survived.

Benediction: Let us go forth as it says in Ephesians and speak the truth in love while building up one another with love.

And may the grace of our Lord, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forevermore. Amen



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