

Order of Service - Spy Hill United Church
Oct. 12th 1967.

Call to worship

Holy Holy Holy

Invocation 369

Hymn ~~575~~ 399

Old Testament Reading: Genesis 11: 1-9

Responsive Psalm 728

New Testament Reading: Luke 14: 25-33

Choir

Announcements

Hymn 595 - Sunday School

Prayers of Confession - Petition
Lord's Prayer.

Address - short prayer

Offering - Dedication

Prayers of Intercession Thanksgiving

Hymn 523

Benediction.

The world - "Unfinished Business".

v. 25-33

In the 14th Chap. of Luke Jesus tells his disciples a story. It was one in which they themselves had, at one time, possibly had a part. Making fun of some neighbor whose ambitions outran his facilities. Or quite as probable they themselves had experienced just such criticisms over undertakings of their own. Doubtless were experiencing it through criticism of their discipleship and Jesus ministry.

Jesus tells them in these few verses just what attributes they will need if they are going to finish the work ^{he} they had started upon. The sacrifice and personal dangers, the criticisms and jeers of their fellows. Doubtless many in the crowd about Jesus were clamoring to become his disciples. Jesus knew his work in the world to be unfinished business and knew the cost and material needed to complete his task. So he chose this story to point out to would-be disciples the material needed to do his work. Sacrifice necessary

The demand made upon his followers was nothing less than total. Anything less than that would call forth the sneers, jeers and jokes of the "fringe" crowd. The "let us wait and see fellows" the ones who not on the inside, putting their shoulders

And minds to the task, ^{But} yet consistently calling hypocrite at those who were attempting something.

It is not necessary for us to draw a portrait from Jesus' day. In many books & periodicals the "unfinished business" of the church is being held up to ridicule and scorn. I may be that the term "comfortable pew" is ~~a~~ justifiable in some instances. It maybe that we need to be awakened or reawakened to what is going on around us. This may be Gods way of pointing out to our consciences the part that Unfinished Business plays in his world.

Despite satellites to the moon, tremendous physical achievements, instant communication from one part of this globe to another we are in fact becoming like the people who built the tower of Babel. Although engaged in a common task they eventually found themselves unable to communicate with each other. Had they become so obsessed with their own achievement that they had lost the ability to listen? and so ran round shouting at each other "you don't communicate!" The end result was that the Tower of Babel became a mockery

33
"A piece of unfinished business." We can imagine the division that was cast upon the people of Babel for this unfinished tower.

It is said of one of Rodin's sculptures that it is intended to represent God. Out of the solid block of marble extends an arm and hand and in the palm of the hand recline the unfinished figures of a man and a woman. The viewer is inclined to conclude that the sculptors meaning lay in the fact that all of us are fashioned out of the same material as God and that we are part of him. Could we go further and find greater meaning in that the unfinished figures in the palm are also a part of God's great design and the sculptor placed them there as a piece of unfinished business, God's plan for humanity in the world. Again perhaps Rodin put those figures there to make people wonder and to find a deeper meaning in that these figures of stone were incomplete because they were lacking God's spirit. Who knows; each sincere viewer comes away with his own conclusion. And each view is from a different human attitude. toward life

4.
In so many walks of life we come across "pieces of unfinished business." So many challenges face us that at times we attempt to build things and only get as far as the foundation. We find we have underestimated the cost and become discouraged. We find we have to give up some cherished ambition or our adventure is drawing family censure. Or our neighbors scoff at us.

In counting the cost do we forget God? Have we counted Him as a co-worker with us in the undertaking. Have we asked ourselves the truly startling question would God really bless what I am about to do. Am I working in accordance with God's plan or am I just building a personal tower.

Bishop Herbert Welch in his book "As I recall my Past Century" has much to say about the partnership between God and man. Bishop Welch is 104. His book was written in his 100th year and he says this - quote "Out of the mass of knowledge with which we have to deal today, I have tried to secure some kind of unity and thinking in my life. The result has been, in my case, the conviction that the greatest fact of God's universe is God; and

5.
the greatest need of our human race is to know God; and the supreme purpose in all the activities of God is to reveal himself fully to the children of men, in order that, beholding "the beauty of the Lord," they may be led to "inquire in his temple" and yield themselves to his will.

Man has tried in many ways to unfathom secrets of the universe. In some he has been successful but never more than partially. His attempts at solution have more often than not ended in "unfinished business". The challenge is still to go on. The pattern becomes clearer with each new discovery. God leads man on step by step, not in a rush of speed but slowly and surely. Each new discovery is a step in the realization of God's plan for his universe.

Again quoting - Bishop Welch says in his book: "Quote. 'Nature, is the only part of the universe in which God can operate without interference by willful men, offers many helpful suggestions as to the will and the ways of God.'"

When man attempts to improve upon nature he has to work with material which God in nature has provided. Let us take a ^{product} part of nature with which each of us here is familiar.

6.
We are all familiar with wheat and its place in our economy and livelihood. We are also familiar with the diseases that attack wheat. Every day our scientists are studying and developing new types of rust and disease resistant wheats. A slow tedious process, that requires step by step documentation and the end result? We all are well aware of what a boon disease resistant, hard red spring wheat, has been to all the bread-eating peoples of the world. In fact most of our grain growing agricultural economy and all its various branches are in existence today because of dedicated work by a few men who unravelled some of the marvels of nature and ~~who could be so~~ of whom it could be said 'they worked with God'. And these men would be the first to tell you 'our work is "unfinished business"':

One could recite many other comparisons of how God works in nature and man in his study and use of nature's provisions must work with God.

So Jesus told his would-be disciples. If you would follow me you must forsake all else

I
Individual
Change
Reborn

become totally involved in my work to the exclusion of all else. 'This was his answer to those who thronged round him and who wished to become his followers. Were their ~~wishes~~ desires strong enough. Are ours! That is the challenge to Christians and would be Christians, everywhere.

Jesus knew that his work would be finished. He also knew the world to be 'a piece of unfinished business' and he knew his followers would have to go out in the world and work with their Father God to further ~~this~~ work and his plan for his universe.

Poem.

Prayer:

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of our hearts, be acceptable in Thy sight. Oh Lord our strength and our Redeemer.

Eternity:

8.
The Eternal Task

Eternity. our Father God with arm outstretched
Beyond the feeble faltering mind of man
A work to do and joy to do it
Thy Plan at work and through eternal ages
Still incomplete and challenging.

When stepping through the door of Death
We find a welcome warm
From loved ones who have preceded us
And from all our striving here on earth
We bring to them but character whose worth,
In that other world of challenge & of bliss,
Is tempered only by response to challenges in this.