

May 21, 2017  
Stewardship Sunday  
6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter  
1 Peter 4:8-11; John 14:15-21

### IT'S ALL GOOD

We have been working our way through the first letter of Peter throughout Eastertide this year. If you Google “Bible passages about stewardship” today’s passage comes up at or near the top of everybody’s list. Hear the word of God.

**1 Peter 4:8-11** <sup>8</sup> Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Be hospitable to one another without complaining. <sup>10</sup> Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. <sup>11</sup> Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

All you need is love right? The Beatles said it so it must be true. But at the Last Supper in the Gospel Lesson today, Jesus is saying well, yes and no. On the one hand yes: it comes down to love. God’s unconditional love for a sinful world led him to send his only Son whose very life and death is the ultimate expression of love. On the other hand there is more to it as Jesus tries to explain to his followers. That we profess our love for him is a given. But words aren’t enough. Just like romantic love, or the love that a parent has for a child, or beloved friends have for each other, saying I love you without actions that reflect that love is a lie.

And so Peter writes to the early church maintain constant love for one another for love covers a multitude of sins. He knows that Christians are still sinners. When Jesus said “if you love me you will keep my commandments,” he knows there will be times for all of us when we will fail to obey him. He isn’t saying that will result in our exclusion from his flock. He is saying he will always be with us through the power of the Holy Spirit, even when we fail. The Holy Spirit will be our advocate and teacher, always there to pick us up spiritually when

we fall spiritually. And in that sense, Christ abides in us and we abide in him and he abides in the father and the father abides in him and so the father abides in us. It is all good.

That is love that is truth. That is what Jesus is telling the disciples and that is what Peter is telling the early church. It is all about being in truly loving relationship with Christ and with each other. And from the beginning of the church, it was understood that his followers would show that love by gathering together in communities, what we now call congregations, to show our love for him by serving each other and supporting the church.

Peter says be good stewards of the grace you have received from God. And he tells us how to be good stewards: serve each other. Use whatever gifts you have because everybody has gifts and all of your gifts come from God. Use them by giving back to God a portion of what you have received.

A few years ago, I remember noticing how a lot of young people were saying “it’s all good” a lot. Whatever was going on, someone would say “it’s all good.” I can’t go hang out because I have to study: It’s all good. I’m going to my Grandma’s for Easter dinner: It’s all good. Oh man, I really wanted to go to that party, but this happened and that happened and I couldn’t go. It’s all good. Oh man, I haven’t done laundry in 3 weeks and I don’t have any clean clothes, I’m having to sort through my clothes on the floor and find something that doesn’t smell too bad. It’s all good.

At the height of the “it’s all good” phrase, we were at Montreat Youth Conference during back home time processing the day. I don’t remember how it came up but someone said “it’s all good.” And I said you know I really don’t know why people say that so often because it’s not all good. There is a lot of bad in the world and you can’t just pretend it’s not there and ignore it by going around saying it’s all good. The young people were looking at me kind of blankly. And

one of them, very kindly and gently explained (because that's how we talk to each other at Montreat) that that's what it means when someone says it's all good. It's like yea things are not all good but you know what, we have hope.

Jesus is telling the disciples at the last supper things are going to be bad for you sometimes, but it's still going to be all good. And Peter says yea, it's hard following Jesus in this world. It goes against everything the rest of the world is telling us we should do and be. But stick together and are good stewards of God's grace, at the end of the day, it's all good.

All the goodness comes from God. And God in Christ, through the Holy Spirit gifts us goodness, calling us to share the goodness with one another.

When we take up the offering this morning we will be the recipients of one of God's most precious gifts—the gift of music, as we hear the voice of a most gifted member of our church family. As you listen, let your heart be filled by God's abundant giving. If you have not already filled out your pledge card, please take a moment and do so. You can place it in the offering plate or in one of the baskets by the doors.