

Conversation Starter

For the week of October 5 to 11, 2008

This week's theme: The End Of The Day
Current sermon series: The Journey
Sunday's Readings: Numbers 27:12-23 Matthew 20:1-16

READ: Job 1:13-19

In one of last Sunday's sermons we find these words: *"It doesn't seem fair that Moses should not be allowed to enter into the Promised Land. Look at all he put up with and all the steps of faith that he had to take along the way. Surely it should be his just reward that he enter the Promised Land. But no, the scripture says that because of a mistake he made at Meribah, [he was not allowed to enter],.. Nor does the story about the workers who were hired to work in the vineyard for the day seem fair. Why should [the ones who worked all day] not get more than those who were hired at the very end of the day and worked for only one hour?"* To sum up what is being presented here: LIFE'S NOT FAIR. Why does one person struggle with many health issues and another person rarely does? Why does a person who lives irresponsibly inherit great wealth whereas a dedicated and hard worker struggle to pay the bills? Why is it that there are people who rarely study yet have great marks yet there are those who study, study and study and have average or poor grades? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why did the very poor country of Haiti get hit by three hurricanes this year? Why is it that many people who have faithfully saved for retirement and who are now retiring have to be "hit hard" by a current financial crisis caused by others? Why? Why? Why? These plus the many other questions that come to your mind certainly remind us that there are occasions when LIFE'S NOT FAIR. Remember Job -- a faithful follower of God? For him, life wasn't fair yet in the midst of all the unfairness, he remained faithful and committed to God. And why? Because he knew that at the end of the day what mattered most was that his friendship with God remain. So, what is the key for us to be able to get through life's challenges, pressures, difficulties and "unfair" times without being overwhelmed to the point of despair? Jesus said: *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)* At the end of the day – when our earthly lives are over – it's the treasures and rewards waiting for us in heaven that really matters.

1. Describe a time in your life when circumstances, from your perspective, weren't fair.
2. How did this "life's not fair" time make you feel?
3. How does God want us to respond in those "life's not fair" moments? And why?
4. What attitudes, lifestyle issues and priorities do you see need changing in your life so that at the end of the day you know there will be treasures stored in heaven for you?

If time permits, continue past this point for further discussion:

5. Other than Job, who else noted in the Bible had a "life's not fair" experience? How did they react? If applicable, what did they learn from their experience? How did their relationship with God/Jesus change as a result of the experience?
6. What scriptures have helped and encouraged you during difficult times?
7. In what ways can you support someone who believes "life's not fair"?