

“Lesson Seven: Live Fully in Your Dash”

Luke 19:28-40

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From the Pulpit

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Prayer for Illumination: Holy One, our strength in suffering and our hope for salvation, lift up your Word of life and pour out your Spirit of Grace so that we may follow faithfully on the way to the cross, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

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In his New York Times best-seller, *The Road to Character*,¹ author David Brooks discusses how to not only do good, but be good. How to live a life of depth and meaning over success and achievement. One way to begin the journey is by asking yourself one simple, yet difficult, question, “Am I living for my résumé or my eulogy?”

For instance, “When you die, who will attend the funeral? And what—if anything, will they have to say during your eulogy?”²

Brooks writes and shares in a TEDtalk:

It occurred to me that there were two sets of virtues, the résumé virtues and the eulogy virtues. The résumé virtues are the skills you bring to the marketplace. The eulogy virtues are the ones that are talked about at your

¹ Brooks, David. *The Road to Character*. New York: Random House, 2015.

² www.medium.com/@mikestrum August 27, 2018.

funeral—whether you were kind, brave, honest or faithful. Were you capable of deep love?

We all know that the eulogy virtues are more important than the résumé ones. But our culture and our educational systems spend more time teaching the skills and strategies you need for career success than the qualities you need to radiate that sort of inner light.

And most of us, including me, would say that the eulogy virtues are the more important of the virtues. But at least in my case, are they the ones that I think about the most? And the answer is no.³ (unquote).

Many of us spend lots of time, working, creating, editing, living 50+ hour work week lives that build our resumes. I have been one of them, heck, I am one of them. Resume virtues do get you in the door... The next interview, the next big job, the next look on the prestigious board at your university or community organization. Those are worldly. They are ambitious. I'll go gently here... resume virtues are important but only get you so far.

The eulogy virtues are the ones that get mentioned when your earthly life has come to an end, which are deeper: who are you, in your depth, what is the nature of your relationships, are you bold, loving, dependable, consistent? Are you of humble

³ And 2014 TEDTalk.

https://www.ted.com/talks/david_brooks_should_you_live_for_your_resume_or_your_eulogy?language=en

character? Do you live in a way that honors God, Creation and our possibilities?⁴

Perhaps resume virtues matter less when you age. When I sit with families to plan a memorial services and I ask, what do you remember most about your loved one? They'll be honest, and say--- His big heart. His caring nature. Her ability to include everyone, always. She valued family and friends. What they value most is the relationship with their loved one when he or she was alive. The moments of life are what they will remember.

Moments in life. That's what we have. Small moments with the ones we love. Enough to build honest and truthful relationships that nourish us and foster a deepening of our character. Many of us live as if we had all the time in the world. But what if we lived as if the end of our lives were near. What would change? We'd take it all in. Not miss a moment. We'd spend more time with loved ones and not at work. We'd make memories and remember the details.

Today, we've heard the story of Jesus as he comes into Jerusalem. He asked friends to help prepare the way for the last chapter of his story. These people know Jesus well. His teachings nourish them, his miracles inspire; his love is healing them. Today they celebrate Jesus. The path down the Mount of Olives descends at a steep angle. Jesus sits on the donkey. His feet brush the ground. He sees the whole city of Jerusalem

⁴ Brooks. The Road to Character.

spread out before him. The people spread cloaks on the road and shout, “blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.” It’s in honor and tribute.

Disciples see a glimpse of Jesus inner character. If they can’t express their joy, God will provide the world with another witness, because truth cannot be silenced. In our text, even rocks will cry out. Even speechless stones will give witness to God’s glory. (Fred Craddock).

Jesus offers the opposite of the political power of the day. He lives with grace and humility. Jesus knows his truth, even if others don’t. Truth cannot be contained or suppressed. Silencing truth doesn’t make it any less true. In the worst days of apartheid, truth kept hope alive. When the civil rights movement filled jail cells, the flame of truth burned bright.

In Columbus, another flame burned bright. His name was Rubén Castilla Herrera. He died a week ago Saturday. Rubén Castilla Herrera was an area activist. He worked with a wide variety of social justice movements. The Columbus Sanctuary Collective, Black Lives Matter, Central Ohio Workers, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, LGBTQ rights and the rights of refugees.

Yesterday Columbus remembered him during a march – a parade - from the Ohio Statehouse to our neighbors at Broad Street United Methodist Church.

Ruben lived his eulogy virtues in the way he moved people, with words and ideas, and with his empathy for immigrants. Ruben saw truth in ordinary moments, and spoke out about those truths in this community. He touched the lives of so many and inspired even more in the work of justice.

Not all of us can speak out like he did. Some have been silenced by circumstance. And some are exhausted, bone tired. For those of us who can speak, that is our job. Jesus tells Pharisees that if disciples are silent, stones will shout out.

In the last week of Jesus' life, moments will be remembered and the details will matter. The small stuff matters. The moments with friends, the dinners, the journey—they matter. Each step this Holy Week can enliven our path to a deeper connection with Jesus and can draw our attention to things we may miss otherwise. If we're attentive---and engage all our senses-- they'll point us to the moments we need to pay attention to.

The truth will shout out. This week will put that conviction to the test. Because this week truth will be crucified. Today Jesus sees danger coming. But he doesn't change course.

This week, under pressure, Jesus will be brave and faithful. This week, under pressure, his disciples will falter. They will fail Jesus, and themselves. One friend will betray another. Ordinary people will do mean things. Political powers will mock and execute a wise, compassionate teacher in an

exceptionally cruel way. In Holy Week, hopes get dashed against hard stones. Truth gets crucified.⁵

It promises to be quite a week. Betrayal, arrest, trial, sentencing, crucifixion, death.... It promises to be quite a week but, God willing, it will end with resurrection. This isn't a week for business as usual – pay attention, stay awake. Walk as close to Jesus as you are able, follow him as closely as you can bear.

This week, stick close to Jesus.

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⁵ With gratitude for the work of colleagues on this sermon, idea and structure and summary, Ann Palmerton at BSPC.