

SNOW-DAY SPECIAL!!!

Pastors Jay & Charlie are saving this week's sermon for next Sunday, so we'll spend time next week giving attention to the Gospel According to Luke. This week we'll celebrate "Snow in Scripture" and also celebrate the Opening of Greensboro's International Civil Rights Center & Museum. Happy "February One" to you, to all of Greensboro, and to everyone worldwide who is faithful to God by seeking an end to oppression and by continuing to strive for human/civil rights.

CELEBRATION OF SNOW IN SCRIPTURE...

+ Job considers the value of friends who disappear when the chips are down. They're like snow in hot weather, nowhere to be found...

Job 6:15-17 "My companions are treacherous like a torrent-bed, like freshets that pass away, that run dark with ice, turbid with melting snow. In time of heat they disappear; when it is hot, they vanish from their place."

+ The psalmist trusts that God's forgiveness is more powerful than our selfish waywardness and disobedience...

Psalms 57:2-3, 5-6 "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. You desire truth in my inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

+ The wisdom of Proverbs pretty much speaks for itself...

Proverbs 26:1 "Like snow in the summer or rain during harvest, so honor is not fitting for a foolish person."

+ The prophet compares the fruitfulness of God's word and work to that of a bountiful harvest after plentiful rain and snow...

Isaiah 55:10-11 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to sow and bread to eat, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

CELEBRATING FEBRUARY 1 -- PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE...

On this 50th anniversary of the Sit-Ins at Woolworth's in downtown Greensboro, as we try to imagine what it was like for The Greensboro Four and the others who supported and surrounded them, we realize another piece of the unfolding dream of a nation that truly reflects the God-intended values we hold dear... that all people are created equal, and that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness aren't good for anyone in our nation until they are good for everyone in our nation. Thanks be to God for this next step in the journey of God's unfolding dream for humanity, and the part we all have in that work as we go about the daily journey of faith. As one civil rights leader has said, "The civil rights movement is not over. It's not just a back-then movement. The civil rights movement is past, present and future, and we all have the opportunity to be a part of it." It's a good weej to reflect on God's work and God's call to pursue justice and make life fair for everyone. Perhaps these verses of Scripture can help.

Psalms 72:12-14

For God delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. God has pity on the weak and the poor, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence God redeems their life; they are precious in God's sight."

Deuteronomy 26:7

"We (Israelites) cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm."

Leviticus 19:15

"You shall not render an unjust (unfair) judgement; you shall not be partial to the poor or partial to the wealthy: with justice (fairness) you shall judge every neighbor."

Psalms 37:6

"God will make your vindication shine like the light, and the justice of your cause like the noonday."

Psalms 103:6

"The Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. The Lord sets the prisoners free."

Isaiah 58:6

"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?"

Amos 5:21, 24

"(God says) I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies of worship... But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

Luke 11:42

Jesus said, "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe with mint and rue and valuable herbs of all kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practiced, without neglecting the others."

Luke 18:7-8

Jesus said, "... And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will God delay long in helping them? I tell you, God will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"