

MIDWEEK MISSIVE – 03/20/18

As our Lenten journey winds down, I am beginning to think that these storms are no accident! They force us to take time to look inward in contemplation, especially if we have no power. We get a better understanding of our interconnectedness, especially when we join with our neighbors in helping to shovel out our neighborhoods. We begin to understand the idea that there is always work to be done, especially if the snow plow has just plowed in our driveway....again. We learn that the discipline of fasting can bring us closer to God, especially when we didn't get to the grocery store the night before the storm. And finally, we learn of the centrality of prayer in our lives, especially as the lights flicker and we pray that the power does not go off!

Okay, so maybe I'm not being entirely serious, but as we await whatever the fourth Nor'easter in March brings us, it is a good time to thank God for all we have been given; it's a good time to check on our neighbors to make sure they are okay; it's a good time to recognize that there are some things we simply cannot control; it's a good time to remember that God has seen us through every storm - real and metaphorical - that we have faced in our lives, and God will be with us always.

I was a senior at Michigan State when the Blizzard of 1978 roared through town. 3 feet of snow in 3 hours. One minute it was clear out, the next we literally couldn't see past our front door, and then, after 3 straight hours, it stopped as quickly as it started, the sun shone brightly and as far as I could see, there was more snow than I had ever seen. I worked at a hotel/conference center at the University and they came and picked me up on a snowmobile and I spent the next 3 days there. It was kind of neat: they gave us each a hotel room and paid us round the clock, even when we were sleeping. The poor college student in me loved that. I remember doing jobs around the center that I had never done before, like running the switchboard and helping out guest services (I normally worked in the kitchen and restaurant.) But what I remember most, all these years later, was that the reason we were open was so that we could provide meals and rooms for the first responders and line workers in the area. We also provided free rooms to stranded travelers, and even invited a few into the kitchen so they could help make their own food! We set up a hospitality room for anyone to come in, get a snack, have some hot cocoa, or a drink. I still remember the laughter and conversation among people who had just met and were thrown together in a way they would never have chosen. When I did get home one of my housemates and I went to our elderly neighbors to check on them and ended up having a great evening of playing Rummy and drinking homemade elderberry wine that our neighbor made. I think back to those few days with nothing but fond memories.

The whole experience taught me that no matter what we face, if we face it together, we are going to be alright. And I think that applies to all the "storms" we face....everything is better if we face it together. But God, if you're listening, could we lighten up on the snow storms for awhile? Just sayin'....

On another note, if you are planning on attending the Ordination Council of Rebecca Driscoll, on Sunday April 29, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. at First Baptist Church in Attleboro, please let me know by return email so we can let them know about how many to expect. And watch for information about how you help show your support for Rebecca by contributing to a reception at First Baptist following the council.

Stay safe and stay warm!

Be peaceful,
Brad

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"Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words." - Francis of Assisi