

DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCY
Communion Meditation –John 17: 17-28 – March 25, 2012
The Church of the Covenant

After the passing of my friend, brother and our Associate Pastor, Randy Boyer, I am sometimes asked, “How are you doing?” Other than the fact that sometimes small things, like my shirts from the dry cleaners all being tethered together by a twisty tie, aggravate me to violently rip them down from my closet, I’m doing fine, “thank you”. Other than the fact that I walk up and down the stairs three times forgetting my laptop every time, I’m doing fine, “thank you.” Other than the fact that I am medicating myself with overwork right now, I’m doing fine, “thank you.” You know, sometimes as a Christian when we’re asked “How’re doing?” we’re supposed to screw on a happy face and respond, “Fantastic!” The truth of the matter is that I’m doing “OK” right now and that is mostly because of your kindness, concern and prayer. What a great congregation we have! How blessed we are!

My friend, Craig Kephart, who is the new Executive Presbyter or head of Washington Presbytery, recently told the story of the mountain climbers who were all tethered together as they made their ascent up Mt. Everest. He said that everyone thinks they are tied together to prevent them from falling. But he said they are actually all tethered together because once they start getting way up on the mountain and it gets scary, being connected means they can’t turn around and go back down the mountain! They need one another in order to make it to the top. They need one another when life gets a little scary. Just like Christians need one another when life gets scary, we need to be tethered together by the Spirit of God when we go through some major traumatic loss in their life. With the loss of Randy we need to get closer together, not farther apart.

The American way of being sort of radically independent works until some major trauma occurs in your life and then you need others. You know, the sort of John-Wayne-Lone-Ranger-I-don’t-need-anyone-else-in-my-life kind of ethos doesn’t cut it when reality intervenes and we realize we really do need one another. There is our Declaration of Independence but today I am making a Declaration of Dependency; that it takes a whole church to get through a time like this one. We all have to all walk through this time together. And there is no shame in admitting we need one another. Jesus was the most DEPENDENT person who ever walked the face of the earth. *“I can do nothing on my own authority” (John 5: 30ff) “I can do nothing apart from my Father.”* He hung out with His disciples for three years and WANTED to be with them. He wanted them to watch and to pray with Him in the Garden. He wanted to be close to His Heavenly Father in prayer. The human part of Jesus wanted to be with other humans and the divine side of Jesus wanted to be with God the Father. And the divine side of Jesus wanted to be with other humans and the human side of Jesus wanted to be with God. People need people. And people need the Lord. If so, with Jesus, then it is so with us, as well.

I want to thank you as a congregation for supporting me and praying for me. That whole week when Randy passed away I would get up in the morning and think –“I can almost FEEL other people praying for me right now.” Throughout the week I had the strongest impressions that people were praying for me all week. I remember waking up on the morning of Randy’s funeral feeling all the prayers of the people surrounding me, encouraging me, giving me strength, allowing me to do a difficult task supported by others and supported by the Lord. I remember walking up the steps into the pulpit that day and feeling a whole congregation walking into the pulpit with me. Man, was that pulpit FULL. It is tough enough with my girth to squeeze in there, let alone with 800 other people! It wasn’t just I alone preaching, it was YOU ALL preaching; it was the Lord preaching and sharing the GOOD Word. It wasn’t my words; it was YOUR words; it wasn’t my words; it was GOD’s Word.

It is why we need to take the hand of Jesus to walk us through this time together. And it is why we need to take one another's hands in order to walk through this time together. We need to be tethered together with the love of Jesus. We need to be connected heart to heart and hand to hand together by the Spirit of the Living God. As we receive communion together TODAY may we have that sense of being tethered to Jesus with bonds which cannot be broken. As we receive communion may we have that sense of being tethered together as a congregation with a lifeline which cannot be broken.

Our scripture is our Savior reminding us –“(They) may be with me where I am, to behold my glory...” (John 17: 24) Jesus lived and He died. Jesus went to the cross and was resurrected. Jesus lived and Jesus lives, just to be with us, just to have us be with His Father, just for us to spend this lifetime in His presence and just to spend the next eternal lifetime with HIM, together, tethered by the love He poured out at the cross, tethered by the Spirit He poured out at an open tomb. When tethered together with Jesus and with others who love Him, believe Him and serve Him, we will be with Him where He is, ultimately to behold His glory in heaven and for all eternity. “Where I am, my servant shall be also.”

I had this thought recently about our friend, brother and pastor, Randy. When he went to heaven he did not go alone. He went to heaven with Jesus holding his hand and with the prayers and thoughts and love of an entire congregation by his side. That's why Randy needed a whole mansion (in my Father's house are MANY mansions)—we were all with him as he went. After 30 years of ministry and studying the Bible my conclusion is this –**God just wants to be with us**. You know, it is almost sad; God has done all He has done just to be with us. God has sent Jesus, just to be with us. God has had His Son die on a cross, just to be with us. God has had His Son Jesus be raised from the dead, just to be with us and grant us eternal life and for us to live *with HIM* for all eternity.

So let's be “with Him” and let's be “with one another” and let's walk through this time, together. Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*