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I CORINTHIANS 1:18-31 CEB

SOLIDARITY

SERMON BY REV. DR. LESLIE CALLAHAN

301 South Alfred Street Alexandria VA 22314
Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley, Senior Pastor



#wearealfredstreet #asbc #selah

Saturday, February 22, 2020

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Leslie Callahan

Sermon: Solidarity

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31



CURRICULUM GUIDE



Sermon Summary

Dr. Callahan opened her sermon by inviting us to share our testimonies. She illustrated this by telling the story of free blacks in Mother Bethel AME Church rejecting the plan of the American Colonization Society. When these individuals chose to reject the colonization plan they were making a deliberate decision to stand in solidarity. They stood in solidarity because they recognized that they contributed to the building of this nation and because they refused to be separated from their enslaved brothers and sisters.

Likewise, we serve a God who chooses to stand in solidarity with those who the world considers to be "low, weak, or foolish." Jesus came into the world and stood in solidarity with the marginalized, poor, and oppressed. We are called to accurately tell this story so that we can remember God found us at our lowest. And if God found us in a state of being despised and rejected then we have no right to reject someone else. We stand in solidarity with God by standing in solidarity with others.

Notes for Facilitators:

Be sure to save time for everyone to complete the mid-season survey during your Village gathering this week.

Survey for Villagers: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/W20MidVill>

Survey for Facilitators & Hosts: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/W20MidFH>

Also don't forget that our church wide fast, SEEK 2020 begins on Sunday, March 1st. Be sure to register and prayerfully prepare.

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. Dr. Callahan says that the stories we tell not only feed and sustain us in the present, but they provide the sustenance and substance of what we pass on from generation to generation. What stories and traditions from your family history provide sustenance and substance for you today?
2. From the choir's sermonic selection, to Dr. Callahan's greetings, and even the closing prayer, friendship with one another and God was a major theme. What friendship has really encouraged you in the past week?
3. Dr. Callahan remarked that "when Jesus died, Jesus made kinship with the incarcerated and the condemned," showing solidarity. Sometimes we befriend people we'd never expect to talk to. What unexpected friendships have you made with others?



Into The Bible Questions:

1. 2 Corinthians 3:17 says “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.” Dr. Callahan uses this scripture to also remind us that not only is there liberty but there is solidarity. What makes it hardest for you to build solidarity in church? Where has division made you less impactful or less engaged?
2. Dr. Callahan preached from a robust text. Take some time to re-read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. What verse or phrase speaks to you the most and why is the verse impactful for you right now?
3. According to Paul (1 Cor. 1:31), what is one thing that every believer should boast about? Read Galatians 6:14. How do these two verses relate and what do you learn from them?

Life Application Questions:

1. Dr. Callahan describes foolishness, not in the traditional sense of being silly, but in the sense that the story of God can actually sound ridiculous to others. Have you had an experience with God that might sound foolish to others? How do the “foolish” things we experience with God, help or hinder our walk?
2. Dr. Callahan said she doesn’t agree with the logic that you should only have friends who are better than you or are already where you want to be. She argued this is antithetical to the love of God in Christ Jesus. Consider the diversity of your friend circle. Who have you wrongly eliminated? Who should you welcome back?
3. Dr. Callahan talks about Paul’s commitment to preach Christ crucified and warns us of our tendency to get to our point of triumph just to forget where we actually were. What benefit do you see in this approach? How could keeping our eyes on where we were, help us to be in more solidarity with others?
4. Dr. Callahan notes that a major distinction between “the church” and “a church” is their solidarity. She then encouraged us by saying that “there is nowhere else in the world, where you can make the connections you make in church.”
 - a) What meaningful connections have you made at Alfred Street?
 - b) Where have you seen solidarity at its best here in Alfred Street?
 - c) How can you make an effort to establish new or different connections with those who are not like you?



"Can I Push It?"

1. In the sermon we are pushed to consider that we can "become too easily a mark for the devils that divide us." How are you sometimes an easy mark for division? We often look elsewhere for the cause of division, but what habits or practices could you personally improve to promote solidarity in the church?
2. Even in crucifixion, Jesus made solidarity with the people who were the "lowest and left out," as an example that there is no place that we can go that God won't find us. How does this insight on Jesus' crucifixion push us as Christians to engage with the marginalized? How do Christianity and church sometimes perpetuate marginalization?

Spirit Work:

We are reminded in this sermon that "we cannot just enjoy the fruit of God's gracious acts." Where in your life are you just enjoying the fruit of money, health, strength, abundant relationships, and other blessings? How can you make a choice to share with someone else this week who cannot make the same claim in this season?



Activity:

BOAST ABOUT GOD

Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 reminds us that nothing is accomplished merely through our personal achievements, but rather through the work of God. Spend some time as a Village family boasting about God. Share examples with one another of blessings that you originally thought were of your own efforts, but are now confident had God's hand written all over.

Additional Question for Married Couples Villages:

1. When you reflect on your relationship from the time that you and your spouse met to now, what might be considered "foolish" to others? How has the foolish become a testimony of God's power in your marriage story?
2. In the sermon, Dr. Callahan references 1 Corinthians 3:6 where Paul says, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." How have you and your spouse watered your marriage? What practices, people, and prayers have you used to keep your marriage thriving and how have you seen God give you increase?
3. The sermon was titled "Solidarity." In your marriage, what do you think have been the greatest enemies to solidarity? How have you learned to restore solidarity when facing those things? Where are you still growing in combating these attacks to your solidarity?

Additional Question for Young Adult Villages:

1. 1 Corinthians 1:18 begins “the message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are being destroyed.” How has your Christian walk seemed “foolish” to those around you? Are there lifestyle, relationship, professional, or other choices you’ve made as a Christian, that others in your life consider foolish? How have you been able to encourage yourself and/or others when criticized for your devotion?
2. In the sermon, Dr. Callahan remarked that “we put ourselves on the trash heap, and God found us right there.” As young adults, we may sometimes discount ourselves for opportunities, relationships, and other blessings. How have you counted yourself out prematurely, and what could you approach differently now knowing that God still calls us even when we wouldn’t call ourselves?
3. Many young adults are striving to be successful, attractive, and keep up with the most popular trends of today, but this sermon reminds us that our faith is God’s gift to us, one that we did not deserve. We did not choose God, but God chose us. How could knowing you are loved and chosen affect the way you view yourself?

Additional Questions for Parents’ Villages:

1. Raising children can come with its share of stressors from the hectic schedules, to the constant expenses of parenting, and the pressures of leading a Christian home. How do you maintain solidarity with God, even amidst the challenges and whirlwind of responsibilities? In your life as a parent, when do you find it the most difficult to be in solidarity with God?

Additional Questions for Women Villages:

1. In a powerful historical account of the meeting at Mother Bethel Church in Philadelphia, Dr. Callahan points out that three thousand men had gathered and that the women had not been invited. Are there still places and moments where women aren’t invited? What do you think is the harm in not hearing women’s voices in the church and community for important decisions like this? Where has your voice and our voices as women made all the difference?

**Please see the black and white version of this week’s guide for additional questions for specialty groups*