

Acts 9:36-43

Psalm 23

Revelation 7:9-17

John 10:22-30

## Sermon May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### *God Cares for Us*

It's been a while since I have walked the journey called childhood. And yet, raising four children, seems to be clearing out the cob webs, and triggering a lot of my past childhood memories.

And what I remember most is how challenging it was to be a child. For example, we spend a lot of our time as children testing the boundaries. We do this not so much to get on our parents' nerves, but to figure out our surroundings, who we are, and where we fit in.

As toddlers we get into everything. We touch things we are not supposed to. We put our hands in drawers or sockets. We accidentally break expensive equipment. We put things into our mouths that we shouldn't (**Image**). We climb things that are dangerous. And every time we did these things in our childhood, our parents would yell at us in frustration or wack at our hand or pick us up and remove us from the situation. More often than not we would stand there puzzled. Sad. Wondering why Mommy or Daddy were so mad at us.

As we get older and become teenagers, we continue to test the boundaries as we start to assert our independence. We have one foot in childhood and the other foot in adulthood. Again, our parents sometimes yell at us or ground us or take away our technology when we cross these boundaries. Sometimes it makes total sense years later why they were mad at us for certain things. But then there are those things we did that our parents got mad at us about that we still wonder why. Mix in all the bodily and hormonal changes we go through as teenagers, and everything gets exacerbated.

Of course, this is in the absence of major life events. What happens if your parents get divorced? Or you have a friend who dies by suicide? Or you have a friend who gets into drugs? Or a parent dies? Or you were in a major accident? Or you are diagnosed with a learning disability? Children too experience traumatic life events that exacerbate these challenges even further.

It is challenging to be a child, and on top of it, sometimes we as adults minimize our children's feelings about these challenges. Probably, because we work so hard to block out the memories of our own childhood experiences.

Being a child is hard, and this is why it is so important, to have people in our lives to reassure us that we matter. That we are cared for. That we are precious in their eyes.

For the disciples, they are facing a lot of hardship for following Jesus. And this is having a toll on their faith. They need reassurance that God is there caring for them. That this persecution will come to an end. That they will experience God's healing and redemption for their lives and for their community. That they are precious in God's eyes.

So, Jesus reassures them that he is their shepherd caring for them (**Image**). Watching out for them. Offering them the gift of eternal life. Healing and redeeming them. Showing them through his words and his actions that they are precious in God's eyes.

Through these words, through Jesus' actions, Jesus reassures us that God is caring for us. That we are precious in God's eyes. That we will not perish. We will not be lost. That we will receive the gift of eternal life. We will receive God's healing and redemption for our lives and for our world.

Jesus reassures us that God is caring for us. And we experience this care through many different means.

For example, God gives us parents who care for us as we grow up in this world. And if our biological parents are unable to care for us in the way we need, often times God invites other adults into our lives who take on the role of parent. So, that we will receive the care we need.

So, we can grow up feeling loved. Feeling God's love for us. Being empowered by this love to love our own children. To love those God has brought into our lives to care for.

Today is Mother's Day. Today we recognize and celebrate those people in our lives who we see as our mother's (**Image**). People who by God's grace have cared for us over the years. Reassuring us that we are loved. That we are precious in God's eyes.

We can also experience this reassurance through God's word (**Image**). Not only in the gospel today, but also, in Psalm 23. A Psalm that has lifted us up time and time again. A Psalm we often recite at funerals or at the beds of those who are dying. A Psalm that reassures us that God walks with us through the darkest valleys of our lives. That no matter what challenges we face, we will dwell in the house of the lord forever. That we are precious in God's eyes.

We can experience this reassurance through the body of Christ, our family here at All Saints. When we face a challenge, our siblings in Christ come together to walk with us (**Image**). Through prayer. Through listening. Through worship like a funeral. Through

food and fellowship. We are reassured through our family at All Saints that we are precious in God's eyes.

There are many ways that God cares for us.

And though we face challenges as children, as adults, as God's creatures, Jesus stands with us. Reassuring us that we are precious in God's eyes. That God is there caring for us. Healing us. Redeeming us. And inviting us to do the same to others.

To be the church in the world, caring for people as they face the challenges that life brings. Reassuring them that they too are precious in God's eyes.

Let us pray, caring God, when we walk through the dark valleys of our lives, reveal your presence to us. Care for us as a shepherd cares for their sheep. Reassure us that we are precious in your sight. That we will not perish. That we will have eternal life. We give thanks for the people you bring into our lives who affirm your care for us. Our parents, our friends, our siblings in Christ, our pastors, our mentors, our teachers. Thank you. **Amen.**

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