

- To all God's Saints at Manatee Life,
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SCRIPTURE:

Galatians 6:14 (MSG) – Larger reading: Galatians 6:1-18

For my part, I am going to boast about nothing but the Cross of our Master, Jesus Christ. Because of that Cross, I have been crucified in relation to the world, set free from the stifling atmosphere of pleasing others and fitting into the little patterns that they dictate.

STORY:

If you were to look at Rembrandt's painting of The Three Crosses, your attention would be drawn first to the center cross on which Jesus died. Then as you would look at the crowd gathered around the foot of that cross, you'd be impressed by the various facial expressions and actions of the people involved in the awful crime of crucifying the Son of God. Finally, your eyes would drift to the edge of the painting and catch sight of another figure, almost hidden in the shadows. Art critics say this is a representation of Rembrandt himself, for he recognized that by his sins he helped nail Jesus to the cross.

OBSERVATION:

St. Paul understood and so did Rembrandt. We put him there ... one nail at a time.

A word of anger ... the nail is driven. With a feeling of prejudice ... the nail is driven. Ignoring the poor and the needy ... the nail is driven. Passing on gossip ... the nail is driven. Allowing addictive behavior to have control ... the nail is driven. Speaking ill of others ... the nail is driven. In many and various ways we take hammer in hand and add blows to the nails of the cross.

And yet, that very crucifixion in which we participate sometimes unknowingly is the very means of salvation for those who drive the nails. It becomes the one and only thing in which we can boast. Everything pales. Nothing else matters. It is central to who we are. The world cannot offer what it offers us. Even as we continue to drive the nails.

QUOTE:

*In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.*

PRAYER:

We don't understand how you can forgive us for causing you so much pain. We are glad that you do. May we only boast in its power and authority.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim

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“See” you at worship this Sunday via Facebook at Manatee United Methodist Church. It is communion Sunday.

There is some conversation taking place about gathering together for worship probably outside in the Prayer Garden. You’ll have to bring your lawn chair. Details to follow once they are finalized.

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