



First United Methodist

Become a part of God's family at First UMC

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*Vision: Hamilton First: a growing extended family sharing Christ's love
in the heart of the city (A United Methodist Congregation)*

Mission: To Know Christ and Make Him Known in the World

August 18, 2010

Dear Friends,

Have you noticed recently, how your eyes can take things for granted? For instance, there is something in your space that has been there for a long time and you do not look at it. You have a tendency to just expect it to be there. Then something happens and you look at it again and see something new. This experience is what happened to the "folk" in this week's scripture.

They had gotten so used to the woman in their midst, they no longer saw her deformity because they no longer saw her. If they saw her, they saw her deformity. Even in the text, she does not have a name. She was the bent woman who was healed on the Sabbath.

I wonder what her name was? Did she have a family? Did she have a talent? What was her personality like? No mention. She was bent over. She could not be too productive, so who cared who she was? Jesus!

Jesus saw her pain and knew the he could help her. But it was the Sabbath. This was not the time to heal. Yet Jesus did heal her. He took the criticism that followed. He was more concerned about the person trapped in a hurt body than in the "rules." He was more interested in showing God's love than showing God as a nit-picking critical super-being who would hold things against you, if you did not measure up. Jesus wanted to give this woman a place in the community, to stop her hurting.

There are several good themes in the previous paragraph, but I want to use the one that suggests we can treat people like objects. I am concerned that this happens to you, too often. That we in our culture look at people and wonder what they can do for us rather than who they are? That as Christians, we do not often enough show how loving God is, rather than whether God agrees with me. This bent woman was a soul to Jesus.

Which tells us two things. First, each of us, regardless of our state-of-being (healthy, sick, young, old, in prison, free, employed, unemployed) is a soul. We are a soul that God loves. Second, even if people treat us like a "thing" we are called to be like Jesus and treat others as souls.

We are loved by God. Jesus told us this, it is demonstrated in this passage. The Bible is full of places where Jesus tells those whom others see as worthless that they are precious in God's sight. It never ends. Grace teaches us that regardless of

our state in life, regardless of our behavior, regardless of our infirmity, God loves us and sees us first as a soul, a person with depth who is worthy of love.

I hope this week, that you will take some time to ponder what it means that you are a soul, loved by God, precious in God's sight. Then as you straighten up and walk a little taller, that you will share that joy with at least one other person.

Can I say it often enough, you are a soul, a full person, precious in God's sight. Have a good walk with God this week and take a few minutes to discuss your worth with God.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy".

Rev. Peggy