

Trail Guide -- Week of January 13, 2020

As a follower of Jesus, you are a person of influence. Whether consciously aware or not, you represent Christ to all who know you as a Christ-follower. No pressure. It's just that Jesus was perfect – and some people found that irritating. What do others expect of you? Perfection? Never getting angry or sarcastic or using “off-color” speech? Not talking about others behind their back? Always fair? What about this for an expectation: authentic. Real. Genuine. Not perfect, but faithful; and known for integrity. Honest. Caring. “Upright”. Actions and attitude really do “speak” to others about who we are and Who we profess to follow.

Yes, you are a person of influence.

So here's the deal – you and I are called to use our influence to point others toward God; toward Christ. Not a building or an organization. Not a denomination. Rather, we are called to point others toward One who loves and longs to welcome home all who have wandered, who are wounded, or have otherwise lost their way. “Let your light shine before others, so that they see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). May Christ illuminate your life this week.

Mon, 1/13 2 Corinthians 5:20 – Think about the role and responsibility of an ambassador. Now, conceptualize and imagine yourself as an ambassador; an ambassador for Christ. In your activities today, how are you representing Christ to others? Are you in regular communication with the one you represent? Are you relating to others based on his priorities and purpose?

Tues, 1/14 Isaiah 25:1 (NRSV or ESV) - Take a few moments to “image” God in your imagination and thoughts. After all, you are made in God's image. What do you know about God – what God is like, what/who God cares about, what/who is important to God, what God has done/is doing in the world (in your life)? How will you “exalt” God today unless you spend time knowing, observing, listening to, accompanying God? Let your gaze be on God, and your glance be on self.

Wed, 1/15 1 Thessalonians 5:24; Philippians 2:13 – What about days that you don't feel like a very worthy representative or ambassador for Christ? What if you have “messed up”? Or, you are just not seeing much spiritual growth in yourself? Take heart, you are not alone. The Divine Paradox is that the One you represent resides within you, and works in and through you. This One does not give up easily...

Thurs, 1/16 Ephesians 1:18-19 – Seeing is believing. Sometimes, believing leads to see- ing. Allow hope to infuse your life today – God's hope for you; God's hope for your family; God's hope for your community; God's hope for your work or school; God's hope for the world. Go out and live hopeful!

Fri, 1/17, Philippians 1:6 - Read over this verse several times. Substitute your name for the pronoun you. Speak this verse aloud with your name in it. Now, substitute LUMC (the “you” in the verse is actually a plural “you all”). Finally, try substituting the names of several Christian friends/family members and make this verse a prayer for them and for our church.

Sat, 1/18, Psalm 25 – Let this psalm of David prayer resonate and echo through your soul today. I was reminded recently of a challenge to memorize parts of this prayer. Find a verse or two to repeat throughout the day as you place your hope, your trust, your life, in the Lord.