**Pastor Tim Message Notes from 11-22-2020
Working with Joy**

I remember conversation I had with a Christian friend who was struggling with some of their understandings of God. So you are aware, this is not someone who is a part of Chestnut Grove Church. And so I was talking with them, I just felt the Lord wanted me to lovingly speak truth into some areas in their life, but with gentleness and grace and humility.

And I felt the Lord say to me, “everyone is on their own journey.” I was reminded that I cannot change anyone, but as I faithfully follow Christ, the Lord can use me as a witness of his grace and truth and love. You and I are simply called to faithfully live out our journey with Jesus as well.

And we are on a journey friends. Certainly 2020 has been a journey for all of us. But our journey with Jesus goes back long before Covid. And in every season of our lives, we are simply called to live it for Jesus.

I am so glad God has called me in this season to serve as your pastor. I pray that it is a long and beautiful season and I trust that God wants to be so much in our midst here at Chestnut Grove.

\*I remember that part of my journey towards pastoring involved me being asked to write a Statement of Call. And then after writing in a few paragraphs about my sense of this call of God on my life, I eventually sat before other Christians in the church who interviewed me and affirmed my calling from the Lord.

But do you know that you are called by God just as much as I am called by God?

Sometimes the pastoral calling is elevated as being more spiritual than other callings. But I believe that every calling from God is a spiritual calling.

God calls every single Christian into the ministry. To be a Christian is to be a minister.

I passionately believe that! The more that the church grasps this, the healthier it will be.

I remember one church that I previously served had a parking spot reserved for The Minister. While the intentions of this were noble, the unfortunate message that it implies is that everyone else is not a minister.

We need to see ourselves as ministers in Jesus’ Name in everything God calls us to in life.

Friends, I believe that the Lord has many callings in each of our lives, but the primary calling for everyone is the same. Our primary calling is to a life of devotion and submission to our Triune God.

Our primary calling is to be his beloved and to joyfully love and serve Him. Everyone of us share that amazing calling.

And then we all have secondary callings. One of mine includes pastoring. I love pastoring. I thank God for the opportunity to be your pastor. I am so blessed. It is a joy to grow in Christ with each of you and to come alongside you and support your journey with Jesus.

I know that when I was moving towards being a social studies teacher years ago, I increasingly felt a sense that I was going against the grain.

Whenever I say ‘against the gain’ it reminds me of something my woodshop teacher from middle school used to often tell our class. He said **“always sand with the grain. Don’t sand against the grain.’**

That I was pursing something that God had not called me to. And it was a release when that door finally closed for me and God made it clearer and clearer where He was leading me.

But sisters and brothers, I believe this with all my heart, every last one of you is called to full-time ministry.

You may recall from last week’s journey through much of the book of Ecclesiastes, the foundation of our life is to stand in awe of God. Every other path in trying to navigate life only leads to a dead end. Solomon teaches us to live to revere and worship and submit to God. And we do this out of love. This is to be the center and foundation of our life.

So what’s the next more important thing you ask? It is live with purpose and intentionality in following His path for us.

Solomon writes this in Ecclesiastes 3:12-13

**I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. 13That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God.**

What is Solomon getting at here? He is telling his readers that it is important for each person to find satisfaction in their work, joy in their work. One’s work is to be one way that we are doing good.

The Lord wants us to enjoy what we do. We are to be people on a mission.

As Solomon taught us last week from Ecclesiastes, our lives here and now are transient. They are like a wisp in the wind.

And God wants us to make the most of it.

We do this first by standing in awe of God, but secondly, we do this by finding joy in what we are doing with our waking hours.

riends, all of us are to be at work in this world.

Work is meant to be something that we enjoy.

And I know that this may be a difficult statement for many of us to hear. Sometimes people are workaholics and that is not healthy and other times people can hate their work.

While there may be short-term times that the Lord calls us to do something that we do not enjoy, His desire for us is to find satisfaction in what we do.

We spend a large % of our life working. God wants us to find satisfaction in what we do.

\*Perhaps you’ve heard the saying that, if you do what you love, you never work a day in your life. I think this may be a bit of an exaggeration, but there is much truth to it.

Friends, every one of us is called to be working. And working does not always mean getting paid either. My Mom was a homemaker and that was a full-time job. And she was dedicated to raising us well and being a support to her children. That was ministry.

If you are younger, school is your work. I want you to find joy and satisfaction in school. It is not about competing with other students or trying to perform in some way. God wants us to enjoy learning and growing.

Do not let school stress you. May school be something that you do to the glory of God.

And for those of us who are retired, please know that we never retire from working for Jesus.

I remember a Christian woman that saw her ministry as regularly going to a nearby dialysis center with her dog and just spending time loving on the people there.

The Lord wants each of us to live with a strong sense of calling and purpose and mission.

It is not so much what you do, but that you do everything you do to the glory of God.

This is part of the abundant life that Jesus desires for each of us.

Perhaps it would be helpful for you to write down your own Statement of Call. But please know that Jesus has called you to follow Him and everyone who follows Him is in the ministry.

One very important ministry that I believe the Lord has called each of us to is the ministry of prayer.

**Highlight the Prayer Tool that is available in our lobby.**

Being people of deep prayer is part of our work for Christ in this world. And it is something that we are to find joy in as well. It is one way that we sand with the grain, so to speak.

Let’s pray…

***Prayer Tool***

Sunday --- pray for the worship gathering of Chestnut Grove; pray for the church universal; pray for Pastor Tim and his family; thank God that we are the light of the world; pray that the church would walk in purity and holiness; thank God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Monday – pray for those who do not know Jesus, that hearts would be softened to the gospel; pray for the church, that we would live to serve Christ and always be all about making His Name great; thank God that He gives us a sound mind through Christ our Lord.

Tuesday – pray for victory over any darkness opposing us and opposing God’s plans in our world – let us put on the full armor of God; pray for Christian growth in each person connected to Chestnut Grove Church; thank God for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Wednesday – pray for our surrounding communities and God using us to reach them with the love of Jesus Christ; pray that we would be bold in our speaking of Jesus; pray that we would each grow in our communication with our Triune God.

Thursday – pray for each Christian to live the abundant life that Jesus has for us; pray that we would all grasp and celebrate our new creation identity we received through faith in Jesus; pray for God’s Church to radiate with joy; thank God for the atoning sacrifice of Jesus our King on the cross for our sins.

Friday – pray for the families of Chestnut Grove; pray for creative ideas to minister to others in Jesus’ Name; pray that we would grow in our love for our Triune God and for our neighbor each day; pray that we would take time to laugh and to play.

Saturday – pray for the sick and those that are going through especially challenging times; pray that we would all finish our earthly race strong in the Lord; thank God for eternal life in Jesus Christ and that the best is yet to be.