LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH GARNER, NC 6/17/18

Seeds of Faith

In the name…

Let us pray…

“Life was brutal, practically medieval. I would regularly go without food and was made to believe the country’s leader could read my mind. After my father was imprisoned and tortured for trading on the black market , a risk he took in order to provide for my mother, my sister and I, my family was branded as criminals and forced to the cruel margins of society. When I was 13, suffering from a botched appendectomy and weighing 60 pounds, my mother and I escaped.

I was not dreaming of freedom when we escaped. I did not even know what it meant to be free. All I knew was that if my family stayed behind, we would probably die, from starvation, disease, or the inhuman conditions of a labor camp.”

Now think about what type of person might have written this

Someone that suffered under the Nazis and had the fear or experiences of concentration camps, or Stalin in the Gulag system, or maybe the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. This was written by a 25 year old North Korean now living in South Korea. The dictator who has brought about such suffering to his own people has been praised by the leader of our own government, has been called talented, and perhaps the biggest insult to North Koreans and all people of the world that Kim Jung Un Loves His People”. I hope that is as abhorrent to you as it is to me.

Over a year and a half ago, I stated what is means to separate church and state. This is way past that, this is a matter of human decency or its disregard thereof.

The gospel lesson today speaks of planting seeds of faith, and faith includes human decency. Loving others even those who can not speak up for themselves, especially those who cannot speak up for themselves. And not praise the one who is brutalizing them. Therefore, for our children we need to model what I means to stand against injustices. Another government official has now quoted Scripture to justify the barbaric practice of separating children from their parents.

He used the passage from the beginning of Romans which says government is instituted by God therefore, we should obey the government. Further down in Romans we read, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. The seed of faith through love is the seed that we need to instill in our children and when that is not happening in our government of course it trickles down to the whole nation, and we need to put the seed in our children that we will not tolerate this, in fact we are appalled by it.

Especially this day, Fathers, but all role models for our children are ones who put seeds of faith, seeds of love in our children.

Bart Millard, we see, from Part one of I Can Only Imagine did not have a father who planted seeds of faith in him. Because of that Bart struggled. My father planted the seed of faith by his commitment to his family. My father took an entire year of classes so he could join the Lutheran Church and all of us worship as a family. However, he was not perfect by any means nor are any of us. The first parable of seeds has the seed planted and then the planter sleeps and the plant grows, we don’t know how. We as a family along with my father attended worship every Sunday but during the week he had a problem with alcohol and still my seed of faith grew maybe not because of him, but the people around me, pastors and young interns whom I feel came about because of my father’s commitment to the church. The seed was planted and sometimes we don’t know how it grows, sometimes we do. Quite often however the most important father in our lives is our heavenly Father. My father had alcohol problems, my brother did also, and since he was here for Jean Marie’s graduation, he tells me his son has even greater problems than he ever had. I am grateful that I do not and I can only chalk it up to the grace of God, my heavenly father who has graced me with His Holy Spirit and kept from the disease of alcoholism, certainly not that I am any better than either of them. I do not know why but I do know with God’s help it can be overcome as my brother did.

All this comes about because of what God has done for us. In Christ we are made new creations according to Paul. Or according to the Old Testament lesson, God can do anything, He can make the high tree low and vice versa, He can make the dry tree green and vice versa. He can bring down world leaders, and we can be part of planting that seed, who brutalize their own people and effect change in government leaders, and we can help plant the seed to bring about that change, who have neglected God’s most important command, that is to love our neighbors because that is the fulfilling of the law.

As we do so, we will be hallowing God’s name, and we will be bringing about his kingdom.

In the name…