

“Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love” - Mother Teresa

I went for a walk with my dogs this morning.

The dogs are always excited to see me. Whether it's twice in one day or not for a week, I get the same enthusiastic greeting: my big, Bernese Mountain dogs bounding toward me, sitting on my feet, then jumping around, excited for some time spent with me.

One dog, Bear, likes to run ahead, then stop, and turn back to me, so I can pet him for a while. Once he has had enough, he runs ahead again - only to stop and turn back for a little more affection; and this can go on for the entire walk.

Sophie and Minnie will hang back and stay close to me, before bolting ahead in search of tree stumps and piles of wood cuttings to explore.

They look alike, but their personalities are so different.

Aren't we like that too? We each have our own personalities and character traits. Good traits, bad traits, maybe some tendencies we need to work on. Our family and friends know us too - the good and the bad; they might even joke about our quirks.

God created us with unique personalities. Some of us are steady and even, great with routine and good habits, we stay close to God every day. Others of us might be spontaneous or a little emotional, we might run ahead with our day or even our week and then check back with God when we need Him.

God loves us and He knows us:

“You have searched me, Lord, and You know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue You, Lord, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before, and You lay Your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Psalm 139: 1 - 6

God knows us, yes, and He also gives us the opportunity to know Him. We can know Him and love Him and choose Him every day. We can do this by reading His Word and praying to Him. Resting in Him. Or, we can let ourselves be overly concerned about our shortcomings, things we “can't do” or “can't help”; and maybe even blame others for our problems. This attitude makes us unhappy and ungrateful, making it difficult to feel God's peace.

In the book of James, I am reminded of a couple of character traits God wants me to have:

I should be quick to listen:

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.” James 1: 19 - 21

I should stay rooted in God's word and be mindful of my actions:

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. James 1: 22 - 25

And, I need to be aware that I have a responsibility to be a light to others and care for those who can not take care of themselves:

"Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." James 1: 26 - 27

It is Ash Wednesday today. Today marks the beginning of Lent.

Let's be different from unbelievers.

Let's remember and believe that Jesus died and rose again - and out of that knowledge, serve others so they can know Him too.

Jesus said:

"let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5: 16

May you feel God's love and blessing on your week,

Marsha Heeg

Worship Director

How Beautiful https://youtu.be/kJM0hFvz_64