

FROM: Bette, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior.

TO: My beloved "morselites" in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

I borrowed that greeting from Paul's letter to Titus - isn't it a lovely greeting? I wish it all to you, my sisters and brothers ~

Psalm 16 - Hebrews 10: 23-25 (from our "Worship in the Park" on June 26, 2022)

First let me say that Sunday was a **GLORIOUS DAY!** The weather was gorgeous, the view of the river was beautiful and being together with our brothers/sisters from the Warren Baptist Church - **PRICELESS!!** There were smiles on **EVERY** face! The joy and peace there was palpable. We are **BLESSED!!** The music was good, the fellowship was good and the **SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD WAS THERE WITH US!**

The title of the sermon was "Pleasant Places" taken from Psalm 16, where David says, "The boundary lines for me have fallen in pleasant places." And he also says that "apart from God we have no good thing." After the service, one of the Baptist folks said to me, jokingly "Well, **THAT** was very **PLEASANT!**" a play on the sermon. **YES! It WAS.** For those of us who struggle each day to **FIND** something pleasant in our day - away from the newscasts and the headlines and the tragedies of the world - we **WANT** something to give us joy and pleasure. **We cannot find this apart from God.**

The Hebrews passage reminds us all that we cannot find joy and the **GOOD** in this life if we forsake the gathering together with **OTHER CHRISTIAN**

BELIEVERS!!! Going to church is more than just "checking the box" and getting it out of the way for the week. It is not just to participate in the work of the church - that is, those who have responsibilities - the unlocking of the doors, the preparation of coffee and food for fellowship time, preparing and handing out bulletins, greeting folks, reading the Scripture, singing, playing instruments, running the sound system, receiving the money and counting it, preaching the word, etc. It is not just to sit in the pew and listen. It is not just to sing the songs. It is not just to praise and magnify the name of our GREAT and AWESOME GOD - it is ALL OF THOSE THINGS, YES!! But it is the GATHERING - it is the FAITH COMMUNITY - the BODY OF BELIEVERS - THIS is where God calls us to come. To be a part - to share each other's joys and mourn and weep with those who weep. We share the burdens....we share the heartbreaks of others..... we are THERE for them in their time of need, just as THEY HAVE BEEN for US!!

I have been mostly on the GIVING side of comfort, peace, prayer, tender compassion and love..... but in the past six months, I have been BLESSED to be on the RECEIVING end of all of that - to have others comfort ME - give ME hope - pray for ME - this is **PROFOUND!!** This is GOD'S GRACE - and I didn't get it sitting at home - I received it IN PERSON - every Sunday with hugs and prayers and smiles and LOVE!!

There is certainly a lot of hate and evil and division in the world today - how do we counteract that? Stand up against it? Prevail? SURVIVE? By arming ourselves with GOD's love and getting FREQUENT REFILLS by gathering together as family - as the Body of Christ - Together - IN PERSON - seeing each other - laughing together, crying together, praying together, raising holy hands to heaven together and praising our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I have said this umpteen times (to you and to all my congregations in the past) - when we MISS CHURCH - for whatever reason - we miss out on a blessing. The day you don't come to worship service, is the day that someone sings a beautiful, moving song that is your favorite of all time. The day you aren't

here, is the day that a former parishioner you have missed for years shows up for a visit! The day you miss church is the day when the message spoke about the VERY THING and EXACT STRUGGLE you are having in life - and you missed it..... It's an OPPORTUNITY to be blessed - so don't miss out!!!

Surround yourself with LOVE and the people who show love - talk to, sit with, sing with, have coffee with the very folks who will be your neighbors in heaven! The folks who bring you joy and laughter and love! YES! MORE OF THAT PLEASE!!

If we want God to hedge us in with boundaries in pleasant places, we have to GO where the pleasant places ARE! Allow God to SHOW US - through others who are also on the path, also searching, also falling and getting up again, also craving peace in their lives.

Let us gather together, not forgetting to assemble, and ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER to the good and the pleasant and the life-giving!!

See you Sunday ~

Blessings~

Bette