



THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

Dear Friends

Yesterday I addressed our ministers on the topic of practicing resurrection in the lead up to Easter. I shared with them some ideas on just what this could mean for us and I share them with you today. The phrase "practice resurrection", is the title of a book by Eugene Person and comes from a poem written by Wendell Berry. But how are we to do this? Here are some suggestions:

1. Reject Negativity

Everybody has a bad day, but we must never allow the bad days to ruin our life. While the pandemic has stretched us all, we must not accept all the negative messages and doomsayers – no one knows the future except God and our lives are in God's hand. Even in the midst of COVID remember to live while taking all the necessary precautions.

2. Say Sorry

Two of the shortest but most important phrases in the English language are "I love you" and "I'm sorry,". Despite their brevity, they are immensely powerful words. You should also use them every time they are true. Few things will do more to help bring healing than an honest apology. That said, if you do not mean your apology, do not say it. Wait until you truly understand what you did wrong or how you hurt the other person, then apologize. Just as there are few things more beneficial to healing than an honest apology, few things are more painful to hear than an empty or false apology.

3. Embrace Positivity

Although 10 people might love your sermon and you have one person who is negative, we remember the negative. Often your mind replays your worst moments and most negative events as an attempt to help you learn from your mistakes, but it does not help. To practice resurrection, stop focusing on what you did wrong. Undo your mistakes by some positive action toward the offended person or situation. Remember too that missional awareness is based on the question, "What is God doing in my community and how can I co-operate with what God is doing?" No matter how difficult your situation might be, God is at work in your congregation. Find what God is doing and co-operate with it.

4. Live Authentically

To practice resurrection, we must first allow our old self which is created by our mind and society's expectations, to be crucified. You only live authentically once you have managed to put to death the old self that you have created. You will feel lighter, freer and so much more joyful.

5. Nurture Your Relationship with God

One of the dangers of ministry is that it can negatively impact our relationship with God. Practice resurrection by taking time throughout the day to connect and nurture your relationship with God. You will notice God's presence more in your life and see God's hand in everything and you will find it difficult to feel lonely or hopeless.

6. Look Within

Congregations often have expectations, and they place those expectations on us. Some of those may be unreasonable and some may be things that we simply can't do well.