The Journey of a Lifetime

Prayer – Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing to you oh God! Open our ears to hear your word and our hearts to love you!
amen

It is a humbling experience to share with you today on Presbyterian Women’s Sunday. When Janice Elliott asked me to speak, I prayerfully agreed because I have blessed by this church and PW! I am a Bible student, not a Bible scholar, so please listen with grace, as I share this message with you! I am much more accustomed to sitting on the steps with the children, than standing before you here!

Almost 3 years ago, in PRECOVID times, Jukie and I made some huge life changes and embarked on a new life’s journey! In late March, Nicole Munnerlyn and I sold our shoppe, Sweet Teas Children’s Boutique. After working between 35 and 50 plus hours a week, I was officially retired! Then on June 30th, Jukie retired from Greenwood OBGYN after 37 years.

This was quite a change for us! We both loved the jobs we had and the people we encountered each day. We were embarking on a new journey in our lives!

Little did we know that our first adventure would begin in just a few days!! On July 3, just 3 days after Jukie’s retirement, our dear friend, Cheryl and Charlie Blackwell found us the RV of our dreams – a 24-foot CHINOOK! as we pored over the pictures posted on the chinook website, we looked at each other and said, Let’s do it”

On July 5th with One suitcase for the two of us, two one-way tickets in hand and the money to purchase the RV, we flew to the tiny town of Medford, Oregon, where we met the person we purchased the RV from. He spent 3 1/2 hours showing us the ins and outs of our new home away from home! We completed the paperwork, handed him the money and then we began our first retirement adventure. A trip of a lifetime!!!

Our Life journey is akin to the story of our RV trip—for our trip as well as our life’s journey we need these 3 things
A Mission  a Map  and a Mentor

The mission

The mission on our RV trip was to go from the west coast Oregon to east coast Bluffton, SC -safely and to have fun along the way.

Our mission as Followers of Jesus Christ as defined in the greater Catechism is to Glorify God and fully enjoy Him forever. And in Ecclesiastes 12:13 God’s ultimate purpose for us is to bring Him the glory He so rightfully deserves.

Mark 12: 28-31 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. noticing Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

“The most important one” answered Jesus, “Is this: Hear O Israel: the Lord our God the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

the Map

Traveling cross country, Jukie and got up each morning and took our Rand McNally map.

We planned *how far we would travel for the day  *which route we would take

  • What sites we would visit *where we would refuel and * where we would camp that evening

We used our Rand McNally map, Wazes, Google Maps and Allstays camping app to find campsites.

We used and needed all these maps to guide us thru the journey. However, Google Maps did lead us astray one time. While traveling in the panhandle of Texas, Google Maps lead us down a road on a steep hill that narrowed to a single lane road crossing a stream. The stream wasn’t deep or flowing rapidly, but its bed was rocky. As we sat contemplating rather to cross the rocky riverbed or not, a white pickup stopped on the other side of the stream, and a long, tall Texan in his cowboy boots and Stetson got of his truck and said that we wouldn’t make it across. With his help, we unhooked the Fiat and I turned it around and found a
place alongside of the road to park it further up the hill. Our Texan friend helped to guide Juke to back the RV up the hill. Meanwhile, as I came back down the hill to the RV, what should I see coiled in the middle of the road but a big rattlesnake. Singing Amazing Grace quietly to allay my fears, and watching carefully unless the snake had cousins nearby, I walked close to the side of the road past the snake!

All of that story to illustrate the importance of having a reliable map! Our life’s guide or map if you will, is God’s own word to us- The Bible! Devotional books are great! I read a devotion on some mornings! But reading God’s word- the Bible is so much more satisfying and feeds my soul in a way that a devotion just can’t compare to! I can hear Bible teacher and woman’s leader, Beth Moore quote 2 timothy 3:14-17 : “Continue in what you have learned and what you have become convinced of because you know those of whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scriptures are God- breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that as a servant of God we may be equipped for every good work!

If you are not in a Bible study, the best advice I can give you regarding your walk with Jesus is to join one! Digging deep into God’s word with a group of committed Christians with deepen your faith and understanding of God and His love for us. Psalm 119:105 tells us Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light on my path.

Mentors

Jukie and I moved to Greenwood when I was 28 years old with 2 young children! The first thing we did was to build a fence around our pool to keep our young son, Jay, safe!

The second thing we did was to join a church. First Presbyterian became our church home and family. Here I found a place to worship, grow in God thru Bible study, and circle. Most of all, I found spiritual guidance in mentors: Women who led, lived, and walked in Godly ways! Betsy Collins, Martha Dunlap, Louise Hartzog, Julie Cooner, Ruby Clark, Erminie Nave, Scottie Jeffreys, Jean Mabe, Jo Robinson, and Peggy Hammett. As I watched these ladies serve, as I taught Sunday school with and was taught by these outstanding women, I grew and I learned, how to serve God, how to teach. Some of my fondest memories of that time in my life were the Sundays I would go to substitute teach with Julie Cooner.
The Bible calls us to grow and mentor. Jesus Himself taught, quizzed, and walked alongside of the disciples preparing them to take leadership roles in spreading His story and His love to others.

As you leave this sanctuary and go out into your life’s journey, your mission to obey, serve, and glorify God.

Be equipped with your map—the word of God—the Bible and mentor and share God’s love with those you encounter!

God created us to walk. I don’t mean just physically; I mean spiritually, morally, and ethically. Just to walk on the right path and to walk in the right direction is a walk of a lifetime which begins when you walk to Jesus, then you walk with Jesus and then you walk for Jesus.