

McCabe United Methodist Church

“Priceless!”

April 26 & 27, 2014 (Confirmation Sunday)

1 John 3:1-3 * Luke 24:36-49:

Pastor Rick Fossum

I bet you didn't know this: The cost of driving a confirmation student to class for one year, \$178.25. The cost of one Student Bible, one note pad and a pencil for each confirmation student, \$17.52. The cost of snacks confirmation students consumed while being driven to class during the year, \$123.41. The cost of the stoles the confirmation students are wearing, \$10.03.

The cost of confirming one's faith in Jesus Christ: **Priceless!**

Today is a **priceless** day for our seven confirmation students. Today, they stand on their own and in their own ways, they will confirm their faith in Jesus Christ.

During these past eight months, the student mentors and myself have spent a lot of time teaching these students about everything from the Bible to church history, from the Trinity to death and dying, from prayer to salvation. Have we taught them all they need to know about faith? About Jesus Christ? About the church? Of course not!

The eight months of confirmation have simply been a part of a journey each student began as a child. A journey that will continue for the rest of their lives. A journey that will hopefully lead them from the faith they have today to a greater and stronger faith tomorrow. Confirmation is just one important step in this journey.

A young boy was very smart, but he had an attitude problem. He didn't like school or studying or church or anything else his parents wanted him to like.

One day, his mother took him to see their pastor, hoping that he could inspire the boy to change his attitude. The pastor and the boy talked for a while. Finally, they got around to talking about science. The boy loved science. He had a gift for understanding how things worked.

The pastor sensed an opportunity. He asked, **“Tell me, what’s the difference between a light bulb and a laser? Do they emit the same amount energy?”**

“Yes,” said the boy, **“the energy is the same. The difference is that with a light bulb the energy is going in all different directions at once. With a laser it’s concentrated along a single beam. And that’s how it gets its piercing or cutting power.”**

“Very good,” replied the pastor. **“The laser concentrates the light. This is what people need to do at work or at school or at church or at home. They need to concentrate the light that is within them.”**

This has been our task with these seven confirmation students. We’ve tried to help them concentrate or focus their faith in Jesus Christ.

Today, because of their faith, these seven confirmation students will make an important commitment or promise. To the best of their ability, each one will be saying **‘Yes’** to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

What happens after they’re confirmed is up to them. After all, it’s their journey. Will their faith grow? Will their relationship with Jesus become stronger? Will they stay active in the church? Will they use their faith in some meaningful way? It will be up to them.

Like all of us, they’re going to face some challenges. They will make some mistakes. It happens! They’re going to stumble and fall from time to time. Life is like that. Sadly, some of our students may stray from their faith, from the church, and from what they know is good and right. It happens.

Hopefully, they won’t forget the promises they made today. Hopefully, they will remember the lessons about Jesus. Hopefully, they will remember that Jesus loves them as they are and no matter what.

There is no secret to growing a person’s faith. It’s a matter of feeding it.

Do you know the difference between a hummingbird and a vulture? They both can fly. They both look for their food. The difference is this: A vulture looks for food that is rotting and dead. They thrive on that diet.

But hummingbirds fly past the rotting and the dead. Instead, they thrive on living flowers and plants for their food.

The vultures and hummingbird both find the kind of food they're looking for. And so do we. Our faith, our relationship with Jesus Christ depends on how we feed it or don't feed it.

In our reading from Luke today, we got a good look at Jesus' disciples. In many ways, those early disciples were just like these confirmation students. They were young and eager to serve the Lord. But, they also had their doubts and fears. They weren't sure about all this Jesus stuff.

Do you remember what the disciples did after Jesus was crucified on Good Friday? They ran away and hid behind closed doors because they were worried and scared. In their minds, they thought Jesus was dead. Their leader was gone. He was no more.

And yet, we know, Jesus wasn't dead. He rose from the grave and gave his disciples a new life to live, a new purpose to follow. The disciples were fed by the living Christ and they went on to change the world with their new faith.

This living Christ continues to feed us today. The challenge I have for our confirmation students is this: grow your faith. Don't stop here. Feed your faith. Nourish the faith you have.

One night, an old Sioux chief told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside of people. The chief said, **"My son, the battle is between two wolves. One wolf is evil. This wolf is full of anger, greed, arrogance, hatred, guilt, resentment, lies.**

"The other wolf is good," said the chief. **"This wolf is full of faith, love, hope, peace, humility, kindness, generosity, truth and compassion."**

The grandson thought about the two wolves for a minute and then he asked, **“Grandfather, which wolf wins?”**

The old Sioux chief replied, **“The one you feed wins!”**

Do you understand? A battle is raging inside of everyone. It's a battle between following the ways of Jesus Christ or not following them. It's a battle between growing our faith or not growing it. It's a battle between serving Jesus or not serving him.

Who wins this battle boils down to which one we feed. If we give up on having a relationship with Jesus Christ, if we choose not to pray, or to read the Bible, or to come to church or Sunday School, we make our choice and we feed that part of us.

My question for you is this: how will you feed your faith?

“See what great love God has lavished on us,” it says in 1 John. **“See what great love God has lavished on us that we should be called children of God.”** We are God's children. Our job is to feed that part of us and become the sons and daughters that God wants us to be.

Like I said earlier, following Christ has a price, but it's worth it. Keep growing your faith, the cost is *priceless*. Keep remembering that you are God's sons and daughters, and this cost is also *priceless*.