

Walk The Walk

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Have you ever encountered someone who talked a big game? This person could do anything, at anytime, anywhere? They were the best of the best, the one who could do it all and make it look effortless. Everything this person said sounded like music to our ears. We eagerly awaited to see what was going to happen and how great it was going to be! But... that person didn't live up to their own hype. They talked a good game. A real good game, but they didn't deliver. They weren't who we thought of them to be. They talked the talk, but couldn't walk the walk. It was disappointing, but their actions didn't quite live up to what their mouth said it could.

That's why we don't focus on what we say. Rather, we focus on what we do. How many different sayings do we have in our culture? A picture is worth a thousand words, actions speak louder than words, don't speak about it – be about it – the list I'm sure goes on and grows because each generation and each geographical region has ultimately the same opinion – it isn't so much what we say we're going to do, but rather what we end up doing. When Jesus spoke to the crowds and spoke of how the “unworthy” and “impure” would see God's kingdom instead of those who just paid lip service. Christianity was never meant to be a quick fix, say this and be done. Christianity has always been focused around not only Gospel and truth and faith, but

going out and talking to the marginalized, helping the sick, the poor, the elderly, the widows.

It has always been about what we do and how we treat our neighbors. I honestly think that's why the Wesleyan movement made such a huge impact and impressive progress over the years. The Wesleyan movement didn't limit itself to a building – it had preachers riding the circuit, going out into the fields, traveling places other clergy in other churches wouldn't. It was out serving.

Today, being confirmation Sunday, we are getting ready to witness our youth enter into this family. This body. This church. It is a special time for them and for us. It reminds us of our own vows we've taken. Whether we said those vows in front of an entire congregation when we were still in school or we said them in a smaller setting once we'd reached adulthood. We made promises – something along the lines of promising to be present, to give, to witness. Our youth are preparing to do the same with us today.

Our scripture from 1st Timothy really stands out about halfway through. Paul is telling Timothy not to let anyone put him down because he's young. Yes, youth have been getting put in their "place" per se for at least the last 2 millenniums or so. There is a thought in our society that children should be seen and not

heard. That youth aren't adults and therefore do not understand nor deserve a place at the table. I love this church because it always wants to include the youth in their activities. It doesn't call up and demand their work or presence – believe me I know of plenty of churches who do that and it is as frustrating as it sounds. This church welcomes and invites our youth to almost everything. It truly is a blessing. But back to Paul – he is saying “Timothy, people are going to look at you differently – treat you differently – because you're younger. Don't let them.”

Now does that mean that youth are always right? If you ask them, yes. In reality, no, but I think a lot of times they are further ahead or making better decisions than we give them credit for. Think back, when you were younger, it was a constant uphill battle to get your footing and to be taken seriously. That hasn't changed much. Paul goes on to tell Timothy that he should teach believers with his life. Meaning not by the words he says, or his age, or social status, but rather his demeanor, his character, his actions, his... walk.

Remember earlier we talked about people who solely focus on what they can say. It sounds amazing, but it doesn't fulfill anything. If anything it lets us down. If we talk the talk, we should walk the walk as well. How often have we heard this phrase “Do as I say, not as I do.” Does that really encourage us to follow what they're saying? We appreciate and respect those

who lead by example. It's no different when we talk about our faith.

We talked a lot in confirmation about our faith journey. The road we travel, the route we've planned. The journey that we've been on since the class started in the beginning of the school year. When this group came together they were all different people. It has been a blessing to watch them ask the tough questions, work with each other, and grow as they walk their walk of faith.

I want us to think back to our beginning and our journey. When was it? Where were you? WHO were you? What ultimately helped you move along the way towards a closer relationship with God? The beautiful thing about your journey is simply that – it's YOUR journey. The paths of friends may be vastly different. They may be strikingly similar, but at the end of the day it is a unique journey that we all travel on.

What is it that helps us grow in our faith? There are numerous ways we can grow, but it is all centered on the same thing of walking the walk. Our faith consists of us diving into scripture, Bible study with friends, asking and learning. Our faith has us called to do something more than just looking out for ourselves. Our faith has called us to walk with God and God's people. Our faith teaches us that we don't just talk about good things or think happy thoughts, but that we also do what it is we talk about.

When it comes to our walk, there are no tasks that are taken for granted. Not everyone is called to be a missionary just like not everyone is called to serve by keeping our community clean. We are of one body, but have many different gifts. Therefore with our combined gifts we can make an even larger impact. Not just at this church, but in our homes, communities, and world around us.

As we grow, we can pick up the pace and maintain momentum. It's our job to encourage and help those along the way as well. I was recently watching old home movies. I hooked up a VCR (explain) and found a video of myself with my grandparents at the age of one or two. They lived at the top of a street on a hill and I watched as I ran around having fun. Sometime into the video I must've decided it would be a good idea to go visit the next door neighbor. Next door also meant downhill. I went full speed down the driveway doing that well too know trot/run thing that kids that age do. And what do you think happened?... I fell. I ate a sidewalk sandwich. I wish I could say that at the young age of 1 or 2 that I hopped up brushed myself off and kept going, but truth is I cried. All on video. My grandfather (who was heard on camera laughing) came over and helped me up. He stayed close and walked with me the rest of the time. I learned how to walk better as I got older and grew. I was able to balance better, keep a good pace, and make steady progress. Remember, that story is like a lot of faith journeys we get into. We start off eager – run and might fall. The key for those who

have journeyed further and longer knowing to help us up. Us being willing to accept the help up and not give up on trying. If anyone here has had a blissful faith journey – I commend you. For many of us, we learn how to walk and encounter a stumble or two along the way.

But we are walking the walk. That is what we focus on. Walk the walk. It isn't – be the fastest, or smartest, memorize the most scripture – just walk the walk. Act out your faith. Live your faith. Don't keep it hidden somewhere and only speak about it. Live it! That's why I love that Paul tells Timothy to teach believers with his life. He tells him to lead by example because people are watching.

There's a country song by Tim McGraw. It talks about how his son emulated things his father did. From letting a not so appropriate word slip out when he spilled his food in the car to the belief in the power of prayer. The song highlights that his son is watching his every move and that his son will pick up and learn from the actions of his father, not just the words he says.

So as we get ready to see our confirmands enter into this family. As they take their vows, remember the journey and walk we all have. Remember that it is our actions and deeds that speak for our faith. That we should lend a hand to those in need and show support to those along the way. Remember where it is we started. Remember where we are now. The eyes of your home, coworkers, classmates, neighbors are on us. We can be that shining example of who Jesus is.

After Paul tells Timothy the things he is to do he goes on to say Cultivate these things. Immerse yourself in them. The people will all see you mature right before their eyes! Keep a firm grasp on both your character and your teaching. Don't be diverted. Just keep at it. Both you and those who hear you will experience salvation.

Let us walk the walk and show the world who Jesus is.

Amen