

Blessings of the Animals “Humanities Best Friend”

Our pets remind us of the goodness of God. The bond between a person and their pet is like no other relationship because the communication between fellow creatures is at its most basic. This week we will continue celebrating this bond of creation and explore the basic form of communication used in training a pet. About one year ago, my husband and I become owners of our dachshund Susanna. Upon incorporating Susie into our lives, it was important for us to figure out how best to communicate and train her so that we could meet her needs and create an environment where all could flourish in our household. Each day this week you are encouraged to reflect on one dog training command word and to think about how this word relates to your relationship with God, our Creator. Through this process, my prayer is that you become increasingly aware of this good creation and how we have an active role and responsibility in the care of this world.

Pastor Rebecca

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon:

Prayer for the Week

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace, where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O God, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen. (Prayer of St. Francis)

This week's sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

Monday, September 24 Sit- Psalm 139:1-18

“you know when I **sit** down and when I rise up.” God knows us! God loves us! The dog training command to “sit” is the first command many dogs will ever learn (and the only command some dogs retain). This foundational command that God knows us and God loves us is the grounding for all that we do. To “Sit” is to intentionally regroup, to pause, realign and show we are ready to listen.

Tuesday, September 25 Stay- Job 12:7-10

“But ask the animals and they will teach you.” To “Stay” requires self-control, or inquisitiveness. In this scripture from Job, his life situation has become the laughingstock to all of his friends. Job sees the injustice of this world and becomes the joke for his friends to laugh at. Sometimes when we are stuck, it is hard to see the big picture, Job sees the big picture, the God who created all things. This book of the bible rubs up against what we perceive to be goodness. *Why would Job “stay” with God? What are some areas in your life that would benefit from the command to “stay”? Where have you stayed too long? The good news of “Stay” is that when we keep our eyes on Christ, when we look to our Lord, the time to release, to let go and to move on is revealed. Christ invites us to stay with him to find that love that is far deeper than we can comprehend.*

Wednesday, September 26 Come- Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me all who are heavy-burdened, and I will give you rest.” My most favorite command to practice and use with my dog Susie is “come.” When I call out the simple phrase with a motion, she comes running to me with her adorable smile and wagging tail. In a similar way God calls us and says, “Come” but how often are we reluctant to do so. This scripture invites you into a relationship with God, it gives each person the opportunity to co-labor with God. *When we hear these words, might you imagine responding to this invitation to “come” as a gift, and the reward of being united with God is far better than anything of this world. When do you most vividly hear God calling you to “Come”?*

Thursday, September 27 Roll Over- Isaiah 11:6-9

In this scripture from Isaiah, strange pairings of animals are interacting together. This image of a “peaceable kingdom” is derived from the once ideal king inaugurating a righteous society where peace, and harmony are spread throughout nature. We live in a society not defined by peace. This Isaiah scripture invites you to rollover, to turn upside down and see the world from a different perspective. *What does a peaceful kingdom look like? How can you be encouraged when you rollover and see the world turned upside down?*

Friday, September 28 High Five!- Psalm 104

You made it through pet obedience school! High Five! Psalm 104 is a marvelous creation hymn, all that God created was called into being through the exercise of God’s Wisdom, in the initial act of creation. Recalling this beautiful creation narrative, is like a giant High Five between humanity and God! God, in creating, wants to keep in contact with us, God is extending His hand so that we can celebrate together. *What was something worth celebrating today? How have you seen God at work in your life this week? When was the last time you couldn’t help but rejoice in the abundant world we live in?*

