

“A Humble Walk”

You know how fond and amazed I am of today's technologies.

Way back in the early 1970' s I was learning how to create computer programs at the New Mexico School of Mines. That computer took up an entire climate-controlled room. Only a few technicians were allowed in that room, and they had to wear special white suits. Today many of us carry a computer *in our pocket!* This computer is much more powerful and versatile than those early models. This computer is integrated with a camera, a telephone, and the internet. We can transmit photos and notes with a few key strokes; I can send medical records to my doctor/son; we all have access to the wisdom of the world...

On the surface, these technologies seem to be good for us.

Friday I was stunned to read in the morning paper (Star Tribune; section A7; 1/27/17) that there now exists an embryo that is *both pig and human!*

Oh, my...

The opening line reads, *“For the first time, biologists have succeeded in growing human stem cells in pig embryos, shifting from science fiction to the realm of possible the idea of developing human organs in animals for later transplant.”*

That same morning paper noted how the group of scientists which maintains the “Doomsday Clock” moved it forward to 2 & 1/2 minutes before midnight, doomsday. This was due to statements our president made regarding both nuclear weapons and climate change.

All these technologies, including nuclear energy and weapons, offer amazing potential and grave danger. We are living in a brave, new world, and I am concerned about our direction.

It may be a mis-quote, but I like it anyhow. Albert Einstein has been quoted as saying something like this. Since the splitting of the atom, everything has changed except the way we think. *Since the splitting of the atom, everything has changed except the way we think.* He has also been quoted as saying, *“The human spirit must prevail over technology.”*

Here's the problem... We have this amazing electronic technology for communicating and learning yet we so commonly mis-use it. Viewing social media over the past year or so has concerned and frightened me. If you have any doubt about the reality of original sin, just look at the language and tone of folks who disagree with one another on the internet. Many of these exchanges display extremely disappointing behavior: hurtful words I hope we would never say face to face... the language is crude and vulgar, the content biased and, too often, outright false.

God has shown us what is good.

*And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

(Micah 6:8)

Jesus leads us on that humble walk when he takes us up the hillside and teaches God's humble way.

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, ⁵ Blessed are the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,...

⁷ Blessed are the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers.

(Matthew 5)

God blesses those who are on this humble walk. Of course, it is not an easy walk. Listen to Eugene Peterson (Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*) use the language of 'intimacy' to describe the obstacles we encounter in this walk. (You've heard this before...)

“This world is no friend to grace. Seeking for intimacy at any level - with God or with persons—is not a venture that gets the support of many people. Intimacy is not good for business. It is inefficient; it lacks 'glamour.' If love of God can be reduced to a ritualized hour of worship, if love of one another can be reduced to an act of sexual intercourse, then routines are simple and the world can be run efficiently. But if we will not settle for the reduction of love to lust and of faith to ritual, and run through the streets asking for more, we will most certainly disturb the peace and be told to behave ourselves and go back to the homes and churches where we belong.

Intimacy is no easy achievement. There is pain - longing, disappointment, and hurt. But, if the costs are considerable, the rewards are magnificent, for in relationship with another and with the God who loves us, we complete the humanity for which we were created. We stutter and stumble, wander and digress, delay and procrastinate; but we do learn to love even as we are loved, steadily and eternally, in Jesus Christ.”

Jesus has shown us the way...

Jesus took the 'humble walk' to a garden where he is betrayed and arrested. From there he humbly walked to a rigged trial and torture, even to death on a cross. This was foolishness to the world, but to us it is life. Jesus made that humble walk in our place; he has done for all of us what God requires: to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God. For Jesus' sake, we are in a good place with God.

And now... for the world's sake, we are called to follow with our own humble walks. Technology can only take us so far. If civilization is to survive, and God's kingdom is to come, then we must be the yeast of loving kindness that will leaven the entire loaf.

We must learn and teach how to listen to one another carefully and how to speak the truth in love...even as God has spoken to us in Jesus Christ.

Amen.