

New St. James Presbyterian Church
Sunday, June 30, 2019
Rev. Dr. David Thompson

“ENERGY AND STAYING POSITIVE”

Text: Jesus said “Who was it that touched me? Somebody did touch me, for I felt that power had gone out from me.”

Have you ever been in a restaurant which is extremely low energy?

Lewis was in such a restaurant and nothing happened for a long time and he grew impatient, so he called over to the waiter, "Waiter, Waiter."

Finally, an extremely low energy waiter came to his table.

"How can I help you?" said the waiter. "Is there something you want?"

"Of course, there is," replied Lewis angrily. "I've been waiting ages for you to take my order."

"Sorry, I've been busy," replied the waiter.

"I don't want excuses," said Lewis, "I just want you should make like a waiter. The service here is absolutely awful."

"With respect," says the waiter, "how do you know this? You haven't had any service."

Have you ever got up in the morning in a really great mood? And then you have gone into work and met someone who is down in the dumps and within five minutes you are as down as they are?

I was talking with a creative writer who said that if there were 5 people evaluating his script and one was negative, that was the person everyone paid attention to. Why? Why does the negative grab the spotlight?

The same man was married, and his wife said that at her work there was an incredibly negative older woman who she really wanted to fire but since that woman was close to retirement she hesitated. His wife, when around this woman, found it very difficult to stay positive; in fact, her energy drained into this woman who seemed to be able to suck it out of her.

There has been a lot of work done related to personal energy fields. David Hawkins M.D., PhD talks about personal energy in his book **Power versus Force**. Wayne Dyer picked up on this research in his book **The Power of Intention**. Basically, it can be argued, that everyone of us, has an energy field around us. When our thoughts are positive that energy field increases in size. Negative thoughts are low energy: things like anger, hate, fear, negative criticism and depression. Positive thoughts like forgiveness, reconciliation, kindness, compassion and love, trump low energy fields and actually are stronger and melt these low energies away like the sun on ice.

Energy is very much concerned with the health of our spirits. St Paul frequently endured opposition. He talks of being aware of evil, not just on the human plane but also on the cosmic level. St Paul defended his energy with spiritual weapons and shields. That is what the Ephesians passage is all about. St Paul wants us to put on spiritual armor to be able to stand our ground when things are at their worst.

He uses the metaphor of a Roman soldier's armor. He sees us buckling on the belt of truth. He sees integrity as the chain mail covering chest and arms. He sees us taking up the shield of faith to absorb the flaming arrows of negative energy. God the Spirit is to be involved in our energy defense. The Christian's weapons are words that come from the Holy Spirit.

If we search the length of the Scripture, we will not find the word 'energy'. The word for what I am talking about in Scripture is 'Power'.

I put to you that the Historical Jesus, was very much aware of his energy field. So much so that even in a crowd, where he is jostled by many people, he is suddenly aware of someone's touch that manages to access his energy field. Suddenly he feels power go out of him. This is however not a loss of energy to a negative person but a healing of someone who is sick. A woman touched him in the belief that if she just could touch him, she would be healed. That belief accessed Jesus' energy field and what occurs is a positive energy transfer, of which he is acutely aware.

In the Gospel today Jesus saw this woman in a Synagogue. She had been bent over for 18 years and on the Sabbath Day Jesus chose to heal her. Most everyone in the synagogue was happy for her except one man- the President of the Synagogue. He was furious and decided to interfere in the proceedings.

Let's note his approach. He decided not to attack Jesus directly but to spank the whole congregation instead. He said to them: "There are six working days. Come out and be cured on one of them, not on the Sabbath."

Suppose that Jesus had done nothing next and the crowd in the Synagogue had obeyed the President and meekly filed out as he expected. Can you see the energy loss; the loss of hope, of vitality, of joy?

That is precisely what the President wanted. In this situation, he was a positive energy inhibitor.

I remember once attending a Roman Catholic Christmas Eve service. There was a lovely atmosphere in the church. People were in a great mood and the energy was high. But when the choir processed down the aisle, halfway down the aisle, the priest stopped at a pew where a man was wearing a ball cap. The priest flipped the cap off the young man's head as he went by, to the embarrassment of the young man. That changed the energy of the service negatively for we all saw it. The Christmas Spirit left the sanctuary as quietly as she had come. The President of the synagogue and that priest were coming from the same negative place.

Remember St Paul's words? "For sword, take that which the Holy Spirit gives you- the words that come from God." Let's listen to what Jesus says: "What hypocrites you are! Is there a

single one of you who does not loose his ox or donkey from the manger and take it out on the Sabbath? And here is this woman, a daughter of Abraham, *who has been kept prisoner for eighteen long years by Satan.*” Then comes a question from the One who sets captives free, that is unanswerable by his critics:

“Was it wrong for her to be freed from her bonds on the Sabbath?”

Notice what happens! Christ’s opponents were covered with confusion, while the mass of the people were delighted. What happened is that the negative energy that was used against Jesus was turned back and his positive energy bursts through again. Here is the classic example of positive energy, its defense and its reassertion. His energy shield is not penetrated and there is no loss of energy. Rather the positive higher energy melts away the dark, weaker energy like sun on ice.

In these two stories of women who were healed, we learn of a crucial difference between the two. Jesus is open to compassion and is willing to give away his healing energy to those who are in need. The woman in the crowd was in great need. She had tried all the doctors for years without success. But in the second story the President of the synagogue is not in need. He is low energy, angry, and determined. Of course, he is self-righteous because he thinks that he is right. For him the rules are more important than healing. So, unfortunately his spirit turns to the negative.

Remember what Martin Luther King said about hate?

He said that “Hate destroys a man’s sense of values and his objectivity. It causes him to describe the beautiful as ugly and the ugly as beautiful, and to confuse the true with the false and the false with the true.” This is what had happened to the ruler of the Synagogue. For him keeping the rules of the Synagogue was far more important than healing a sick person. His values had become skewed.

To the President of the Synagogue’s attack, *Jesus is not vulnerable.* What he tries to do is reorient the values back to where they need to be. When this happens the energy flows positively again. Scripture says that all the people were overjoyed. Why? Because they were being given positive healing words.

What can we learn from this? There are times when we need to be open and undefended in order to be compassionate. There are times however when the values get skewed, that we need to defend!

Sometimes when people are down, we just need to put our arms around someone and care and listen to them when they are down. There is a way to do that without us also going down into the mire.

I used to know a psychologist who spent his days counseling troubled people. I asked him about his energy levels. He said; “David, you have to listen to people with *empathy and objectivity* or you will not be able to help them. If I got emotionally involved with all my patients and carried the load of their problems on my shoulders, I would soon crack up. Then David, I

would not be able to help them. You need to be able to defend your energy or you soon will need counseling yourself.”

Perhaps you are married to a spouse who is always down and always complaining. What do you do? How do you stay sane when someone that close to you is always down?

You begin with yourself. Understand that the only person in the world you can change is yourself. All of us have access to Almighty God. We need our own direct line. Nobody else’s faith will do.

God the Holy Spirit comes to our aid in these circumstances. The Spirit of God has two distinct roles to play if we are open. The Spirit gives us the **words** to say and the Spirit *always leads us into the truth that sets us free.*

Do you have trouble going into work because there is a negative person there?

Find a mind metaphor that works for you, some image in your mind. For instance, picture in front of you a great bow wave of positive energy, similar to a boat moving fast through the water. This bow wave contains love, peace, joy and hope. Then watch as this bow wave brushes away everything that is not positive to either side.

Positive people have a power about them. At New St. James we are very fortunate to have some wonderful positive thinkers from whom we all can learn. If you watch them carefully you will find that they turn negative statements, we make into positive ones. They are the ones who see the glass not half empty but half full. And they are good at it because they practice this as a lifestyle.

Alan Cohen, in his book, *The Dragon Doesn’t Live Here anymore* says: “Positive thinking is the acceptance of Truth. When we open our minds to the possibility of the goodness of God, it allows God the opportunity to pour blessings of love and Light into the chalice of our lives. When we align the thinking mind with the Creative Mind of God, we make available to ourselves a power which we do not completely understand but are fully capable of using for the uplifting of all.”

How does this positive energy work?

We don’t know. Do we understand it? No.

Cohen describes one woman who was paralyzed by a stroke except for one little finger. For a long time, she succumbed to negative thinking. Then one day she began to focus on the one finger that worked. She paid attention to it. She blessed it. She moved it. Then one morning she awoke to find that she could move another finger, then another, until one day she could move her hand. She kept on thanking God for all the parts of her body that could move until one day she was able to move her whole body.

What was going on here?

We don’t know. But that alignment with that power, which we don’t completely understand, **but are fully capable of using**, uplifts everyone!

Joel Osteen tells the story of a man and his small son who were hiking up a mountain. Suddenly the little boy slipped and slid about 30 yards down the mountain. Unhurt but frightened he called out: "Help me!" and a voice, not his fathers answered back, "Help me!"

The youngster looked surprised and confused and said, "who are you?" And the voice shouted back "who are you?"

The boy got aggravated and said, "You're a coward." The voice shouted back "You're a coward!"

The boy shot back "You're a fool!" and the voice repeated "You're a fool!".

By then the boy's father had reached him and extricated him from the brush and the boy looked up and said, "Dad who is that?"

The father chuckled and said "Son. that's called an echo, but it is also called life. He said let me show you something!"

His dad shouted out: "You're a winner!" The voice shouted back "You're a winner!"

The dad yelled "You've got what it takes!" and the voice boomed back "you've got what it takes."

"You can make it!" and the voice shouted back "You can make it!"

"Son, that is exactly how it is in life. Whatever you send out always comes back to you. "

Jesus said, "Whatsoever we sow, that we shall also reap."

Whatever life challenge we are facing today can be reflected back. If we use negative words, they will come back to us. If our words are positive, they can be reflected back to us as well. When we are down discouraged, upset, or disillusioned and feeling weak, if we say words of faith like "By my God I can leap over any wall." Or "All things are possible to those who believe" or "Nothing is impossible for God", positive healing energy can be released.

Faith

We can always ask: What would Jesus do? What is the higher level of energy that we can shine like the sun on ice?

Whatever we send out comes back to us. So, there is a choice to make. Whenever we hear ourselves or others being negative, we need to defend our positive energy. To do this we will need a *spiritual* weapon. Please note that the only aggressive weapon in St Paul's list is the *sword of the spirit* – "take that which the Holy Spirit gives you- the words that come from God." The rest are defensive weapons, the shield of faith, the belt of truth, integrity to cover the chest and arms!

Donna Wick founder of The center for Positive Change in Houston Texas, started a tradition in her family which she kept going all year. She called it *positive energy giving* and their *weekly gift of kindness*.

One particular week, hard up for a project, with her kids in the car at the time, all clamoring that they wanted to go to Macdonald's, Donna suddenly got the idea that the pan handlers on the street might like a free lunch. So, she turned into McDonald's and bought lunches for her kids and 15 lunches for the homeless and panhandlers. It was easy for her to do. She would pull up at a curb and hand out a lunch bag and then speed away. She loved what she saw in the rearview mirror- surprise and delight as they opened their bag.

The last person to receive a bag was a woman. Donna gave her the lunch then pulled a U turn and was caught by a traffic light. The surprised woman came up to the car and Donna lowered her power window. "No one has ever done anything like this for me before", the woman said in amazement. So, when Donna said, "When do you think that you will eat your lunch?"

The woman looked at Donna with her huge tired eyes and said "Oh honey, I'm not going to eat *this* lunch. You see I have a little girl of my own and she just loves McDonalds, but I can never buy it for her because I just don't have the money. But tonight, she is going to have McDonalds!"

As Donna drove away, she had tears in her eyes.

Now why would someone who is sophisticated enough to find the Center for Positive Change in Houston, herself resort to random acts of kindness?

Because Donna has learned a great secret. Acts of kindness energize us positively. But we would not have learned about Donna's acts of random kindness, without that last encounter with the woman. Why? Because the woman who put her child first, was the one who energized Donna the most. Why?

Because true kindness is selfless, **and selfless love is the highest energy of them all. So, no matter what you are facing today, shine selfless energy and kindness on the ice and it has to melt!**