

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

When I was a young child my grandparents would always give my brothers and me a Bible or some sort of religious story book at Easter. I remember thinking, this is okay, but where is the good stuff? Where is the chocolate and the marshmallow peeps? I never really realized the impact of these gifts until I was older. In each of the books that I received there was always a handwritten note from my grandmother letting me know how much she and my grandpa loved me and that they prayed for me everyday. They prayed that I would grow up having a relationship with God. After John and I got married and moved to Gettysburg, my grandma would write notes to us, and in each note she would remind John and I that she was praying for us. It's amazing for me to see this continue with my son. My grandmother writes notes to Benjamin in cards letting him know that she loves him and prays for him. I am extremely grateful for my grandparents – both paternal and maternal and my parents and extended family for all that they have taught me over the years about God.

When I read the texts for today, I couldn't help but get very excited about the text from II Timothy – especially verses 3 through 7. For me, these verses sum up for us the core of passing on the faith. The key to passing on the faith are the relationships that we share with our families and friends.

Paul writes to Timothy as a dear friend. The author recalls his ancestors when he thinks about how he worships God. He remembers what his ancestors taught him. From that point, he reminds Timothy of the faith that had been passed to him from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. The author also stresses to Timothy that the faith that had been passed to him, was alive and well with him and that he needed to share it.

Timothy was challenged to continue to pass on the faith to future generations. We are challenged to pass on the faith to our children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews; really anyone who we have a relationship with.

During Lent Pastor Greg and I preached on the book frogs without Legs can't hear. We were reminded that we are all important in passing on the faith. We all have a role. We all equip disciples for ministry.

How do we equip disciples? In our relationships with other people, we model God's love and care by our words and our actions. A great way to share the faith is through prayer. Pray with your spouse, your children, your grandchildren, your brothers and sisters, and friends.

I know it's easy for me to stand up here and say an easy thing to do is pray. And I know that praying can cause a lot of anxiety for some people. Sometimes we are afraid that we won't say the right thing. During the first week of confirmation I told the 7th graders that part of being a disciple is communicating with God. I then shared with them that we would take turns throughout the year leading the opening and closing prayer. We could

use preprinted prayers or the confirmand could say a prayer from the heart. I reminded the youth that they should pray what they felt they wanted God to know. The prayer didn't have to be polished and perfect. To my joy, the youth have participated beautifully.

We also equip and make disciples by sharing the scriptures with each other. When we tell our favorite Bible stories to others we might intrigue the person or the people that we are sharing it with to explore that story further or to tell you about their favorite story.

We make disciples by worshipping God in our daily lives. We worship here on Sunday mornings, but we praise God throughout our week in different ways. Maybe it's by taking a quiet walk, or by journaling. Whatever we do away from the church helps teach others about what it means to be a disciple of God.

When we help others, we model to those watching what it means to be a disciple. In each and everything we do, we share our beliefs and values. In today's world, there are many things that we can demonstrate to those we have relationships with. The question before all of us are what will we pass on to future generations? Our culture pushes us to look out for ourselves. God calls us to reach out to the margins of society. He calls us to think of others.

That being said, I would like to lift up is that there aren't any perfect disciples. The first twelve disciples demonstrated that to us many times. We are all on a faith journey. We each can support and share God's love to one another.

Our relationships with our children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, friends, brothers, and sisters are important to us. We share a great deal in these relationships – including the faith. Like Timothy, his mother, and his grandmother – we too pass the faith from generation to generation.

Pastor Kerry Nelson reminds us that, “God creates a world in which human beings don't come out done. They are utterly dependent on the adults in their lives, specifically their parents or anyone else adopting a parental role in their lives. While much of their development is on genetic auto-pilot, it takes others to have them learn about life. And about God...Parents disciple their children on a daily basis.”

None of us are complete. We don't have all of the answers to what it means to be a disciple of God. We have our families, friends, and acquaintances that model discipleship to us. We model discipleship to everyone who we interact with. Our relationships are key in passing on the faith.

Thank you for all that you do to model discipleship to those in your lives.

Let us pray. Gracious God, we give you thanks for the people, including our parents, grandparents, and others who have taught us about life and about faith. Whether taught consciously or unconsciously, we thank you for what we have learned. Help us to see our

responsibilities to pass the faith on to the next generation and give them the willingness to do so with their hearts, mouths and eyes wide open. In Jesus' name. Amen.