

Pieces of the Puzzle - Sermon 11/13/21

As we all start this busy holiday season you're always looking for that one extra thing to put on your plate right? No? Well, you aren't my family. We say, Christmas shopping, thanksgiving, and 1,000 other activities - not enough. Let's add that giant puzzle with the tiny pieces to the mix. We let it sit at the table. Put our dinner over top of it while we talk and sort through the pieces hiding in plain sight. Suddenly we are set on a goal, and the tv and other electronics turn into nothing. As we were doing our last puzzle - vertical vill with 1,000 pieces.

As we buy puzzles and spend countless hours trying to put it all together, we have so much trust.

Kid-You trust the puzzle company to put in all the pieces, so why not trust God to do the same for your life.

We sort through that puzzle, if you are an organized person you find your corner pieces first.

Kid - Your corner pieces are like your family, the pieces easiest to find when you don't know where to start.

Kid -Your edges are the rest of your family and friends there to outline your puzzle, there to give you the clearest idea of what you are doing.

Then there is the box, God's outline, his plan for you. If you ever tried doing a giant puzzle without a box- which if you have - wow major respect. But it also takes a lot longer. Even doing a box with the puzzle, I get it, sometimes that box seems to look nothing like your puzzle. You're looking down and you just can't find that one spot where that piece is supposed to go. Sometimes you just have to look at it from a different angle, flip it upside down, or turn it.

Kid - We ask God to change our situations, not knowing that God has put us in situations to change us.

He has put us in that puzzle, but only he can see that box, we have no idea what the whole thing looks like. Sometimes the only thing you can do is put your head down relax, and do that puzzle.

Kid - Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.' Matthew chapter 6 verse 34.

I thought this bible verse would be perfect as we go into November. And in coordination with our puzzle. November is filled with so many new things, the end of the year right around the corner, the big upcoming holidays to plan for, and all of that with still the thought of the pandemic looming over our heads.

I hadn't given any thought to what we were going to do for this sermon until a couple of weeks ago. It had snuck up on me, along with everything else this month. So I drove home, still couldn't think of anything. I eat lunch and tried to start a sermon, only could think of 'good morning everyone. Then I went to the driving range. Just like that puzzle piece my sermon fell into place. I was hitting and hitting. And as I was swinging I realized that I wasn't playing golf. Sure I was hitting the ball, but my mind was not there. I was so focused on this upcoming week, and what I needed to do that I was not in the headspace I needed to be in. I was just going through the motions without enjoying what I was doing.

This brought me back to the last tournament I played in. It was the very end of summer, I had heard about the tournament but I hadn't really planned on playing in it, I was just ready to focus on starting the school year. But later that night my mom convinced me to play in it, one last tournament before the start of the school year. She said "just go out and play golf, play your game," Easier said than done.

So when I woke up that morning I got ready just like I was playing a normal round. I didn't let myself think about it. We got to the course, we warmed up, I didn't think about it. I was there, I was having fun, and that's what golf is about. Even on the first tee box, and if you have ever played golf. Even just one round, you know what happens on the first tee box. The pressure of everyone watching you is almost tangent. But I didn't feel it. I was just in the moment having fun. I had a good drive and made par, because for me I was just there, on that hole having fun. After the first 9, I had shot a 41. I watched everyone else hit one bad shot, and think it was over. They were stuck like I had been, thinking about the future score, rather than just being in the moment of the hole they were playing. The holes were just pieces of the puzzle that was the tournament. I couldn't see the final score or picture, I just had the hole.

I walked away from that tournament with my name on the trophy, and a new best score for 18 holes. But the most important thing was I walked away with a lesson. Focusing or dreading the future blinds your view of the presence. The same goes for the past. You can't focus on that last shot - well if I just did this or that, it would all change and I would be in such a better position. No. You are in the present. Focus on that.

Kid: All too often people will live in the past, or worry too much about the future that the present slips away from them.

Kid: Don't just go through the motions of your day, or else you're not actually living it.

Remember this as the holiday season approaches. This is always my favorite time of year. Don't be clouded in the blur of activities, be there with your family.

God will take care of it. God has the box to your puzzle, the picture to follow for your life. Every piece is the day that will challenge you, but you will make it through that situation and come out stronger on the other side, and it will change you for the better. Use the advice from your Corner pieces- being your family, and your outside pieces being either your friends, neighbors, or church. But above all rely on that person with the box. Our truly amazing god.

