



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

A Devotion During This Time of the Coronavirus Pandemic Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, June 20, 2021

Working Together with the Father

By Daniel H. Wilcox

2 Corinthians 6:1-13

6:1 As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.

6:2 For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

6:3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry,

6:4 but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities,

6:5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger;

6:6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love,

6:7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;

6:8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true;

6:9 as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see--we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed;

6:10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

6:11 We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you.

6:12 There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours.

6:13 In return--I speak as to children--open wide your hearts also.

In 1996, Wil Smith, a mature enrollee of 27, came to Bowdoin College. He also brought his infant daughter, Olivia. Wil and Olivia survived through Olivia accompanying Wil to his night cleaning job at Staples and his basketball teammates being her baby sitters. On graduation day, showered with a standing ovation, both Wil and Olivia were called as graduates. Together, Wil and Olivia obtained a baccalaureate degree. Wil and Olivia Smith demonstrated a marvelous father-child partnership overcoming great obstacles.

Paul in 2 Corinthians commends an effectual partnership between God and believers in the reconciliation of humanity. Believers when reconciled to God become servants that assist God to affect salvation by being authentic witnesses through ardent endurance. This endurance faces challenges of hardships, afflictions, calamities, and many other impediments. Yet, God gives believers authentic witness to affect salvation through a virtuous life of purity, patience, kindness, holiness, love, truthfulness, and God's awesome power. Believers willingly join God in this noble enterprise to save the world by rescuing humanity from the certain death of sin. Repentant sinners become professing believers as agents of divine mercy and salvation.

Let us, on this Father's Day, continue to serve with God the Father to reconcile humanity to the Kingdom of God and its graceful purpose.

TALK: Take a moment to be silent, reflect, and share (write down)—Reflecting on the scripture, share a time/instance when you felt that you have worked with God? How did this experience make you feel or direct you?

PRAY: Father God, most of all, we seek to praise and worship you. We know that you are our creator, our redemption, and our first love. Thank you for each breath, for each gift, and for being there for us. Thank you for the wisdom you give and that you truly seek to have a relationship and bond with us. Help us glean and understand what it means to be a good parent from watching how you teach, direct, and love us. We worship you, our father, today and every day. In your name, the name of Jesus, and the name of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

ACT:

1. During the Kingdomtide season, share time working with a mentor or father figure on a reconciliation project. Journal your experience and reflect on your spiritual journey. Do what you can to protect the health of others and yourself by practicing social distancing as much as possible, washing your hands often, wearing face covering to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and prayerfully considering getting the vaccine when it is available—See: <http://www.amechealth.org>.

2. See also the activities that accompanies this devotion.

3. See the resources to commemorate the Emanuel 9.

Song:

Faith of Our Fathers
AMEC Hymnal, #429

1. Faith of our fathers! living still,
In spite of dungeon, fire and sword;
Oh how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene'er we hear that glorious Word!

Refrain

*Faith of our fathers, holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death.*

2. Faith of our fathers! faith and prayer
Have kept our country brave and free;
And through the truth that comes from God
Her children have true liberty.
3. Faith of our fathers! we will strive
To win all nations unto Thee;
And through the truth that comes from God,
We all shall then be truly free.
4. Faith of our fathers! we will love
Both friend and foe in all our strife;
And preach thee, too, as love knows how,
By kindly words and virtuous life.

Physical space—You may wish to create a dedicated space for your time of devotion. You may choose to place a candle, bible, and special symbols or material/fabric to help you focus and center during this time of reflection and prayer.

If you use this meditation and exercise in a time of family or group devotion, share in the leadership; allow different persons to read or lead different parts of this meditation.



(Photo of Wil Smith and Olivia at graduation)

The Christian Education Department will continue to develop resources that can be used as times of personal and collective devotion and study during this pandemic to help us all sustain and strengthen our faith and resolve.