

“Worthy of the Gospel”

September 2008

Hymn Jesus, stand among us VU 396

Scripture Philippians 1: 15-27

Verse 27 “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.”

Prayer Let us pray –Your ways, O God, surprise us, for your standards are not our own. We want quick results, while you work patiently for steady transformation. We seek to comprehend within narrow limits, but you come to us to broaden our horizons. We dare to worship what we cannot see because Christ has demonstrated that your love is real. Love us now into becoming all we are meant to be. Amen.

Lesson We’re coming to the end of summer. The world has just witnessed the Olympic Games from Beijing and has learned more about China and its people than we may have expected. We have also seen triumphs and defeats as athletes competed against each other and against the clock. Some things we saw or read about were heart-warming and others were heart-wrenching. Was this the “real world”?

While this has been going on we have also continued to witness violence, poverty and cruelty in Afghanistan, Georgia, Iraq, and Zimbabwe and even in Canada on our “reserves” and in our cities. Is this the world as it should be?

And now we move into the fall season with its “back to school”, its slowing down of the growth of plants, its planning and preparation for winter, and its elections within different levels of governments.

As I prepare this, the “Democrat” convention is taking place in Denver, Colorado. We are reminded of people such as Abe Lincoln, John and Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King who were far from perfect but whose lives were taken while they were trying to make their country a better and fairer place in which all people could live as equals, without fear.

I was taken by some things which Michele Obama noted in her speech from her life experiences, such as:

“you treat people with dignity and respect, even if you don’t know them, and even if you don’t agree with them.”;

“we also know what our world should look like.....we know what fairness and justice and opportunity look like.....(we need) to believe in ourselves -- to find the strength within ourselves to strive for the world as it should be.”;

“the young people serving our communities – teaching children, cleaning up neighbourhoods, caring for the least among us each and every day.”;

“all of us driven by a simple belief that the world as it is just won’t do – that we have an obligation to fight for the world as it should be.”

To me these are good observations. I believe that we in AOTS, as for all those who serve Christ, have a continuing obligation to continue to serve wherever we

see a need. As Paul states in our gospel passage, “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”

There are many places we can serve to make this world a better place. Jesus Christ, our example, showed us many ways. As followers, “as one that serves”, let us too be examples to the world, even in our small corner. May our lives bring light that others might follow, not in our ways, but in the way of the gospel of Christ.

Discussion What’s wrong in the world?
 What’s wrong right here in our town?
 Is what we are doing worthy of the gospel of Christ?

Prayer Let us pray – O God, we know the gospel of Christ is ours for sharing. Help us to walk in the spirit, that we may lead worthy lives. Your Spirit strengthens us and fills us with joy. We seek to grow in faith and to help others to grow. Your harvest, O God, needs the labour of our hands. May our labours bear fruit for Christ. May our manner of life be worthy of the gospel. Amen.

**Coming events Check for Men’s Fall Rallies and Roundups in your area this fall
 Banff men’s conference 17 – 19 October**

Book of the month The Book of Job