

Prayer of the Week:

Almighty God, look mercifully upon your people, that by your great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

(Source: Book of Common Prayer 2019, Collects of the Christian Year, The Sixth Sunday of Epiphany)

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.

We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.



The Big Sort
James 2:1-17 (NRSV)
February 14th

Our Tendency to Sort

How many of us, when enjoying our favorite candy, sort out our favorite flavors and ignore or trade the others?

While this practice of sorting and evaluation is harmless when it comes to candy, the unfortunate truth is we all have a tendency to do the same thing when it comes to people. We assess, evaluate, and size people up to establish a pecking order. Throughout history, we've tended to sort according to things like color, wealth, language, ability, and so on. We are so good at this sorting that it only takes seconds before the evaluation is performed unconsciously.

We tend to favor those who can benefit us and ignore those who cannot. James exposes this practice as evil.

His warning shows us this truth: The Church is to demonstrate the generous, universal love of God.

No Work? No Faith

This leads right into the next passage of scripture

So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

-James 2:17 (NRSV)

Sometimes our faith is heavy on words and light on action. This is not good according to James.

Suppose you see a brother or sister that has no food or clothing and you say to them, "Stay warm and eat well" but do nothing to help. Those words may sound like a blessing, but they don't do anything bless.

Instead of having a faith that is heavy on words and light on action, we are to have a faith that is translated into action. That is what is going to lead us into true living and what is going to bring good into the world.

Our faith in Jesus, if functioning properly in our lives, should lead us to faith-filled action in the world.

"Our theology must fit into overalls."

-Kenneth Grider

My hope and prayer is that our faith will translate into action; we'll be doers of the word with a faith that is alive and brings hope, healing, and goodness into the world.