



Servants of Christ
Rev. Chris McNeill, Senior Pastor
3827 Broadway, Houston, Texas 77017
713-986-5195
www.ServantsNow.org
<https://m.facebook.com/ServantsNow/>

A Devotion for This Week

Are You Baking Bread?

Matthew 28: 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

As Christians we have three main requirements:

--love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength,

--love our neighbor as ourselves, and

--make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Notice there is nothing that sounds like, 'Go find a church you like where the music is cool and try to do good every once in a while.' Many wonderful churches offer more Zumba and Gentle Yoga classes than an average gym; I am sure they are making disciples, but you really should see their revolving flat screen of activities. One even has a choice between Chinese and American Mah Jong (a tile game). We have more technology in our cellphones than we had when we sent people to

the moon. We have more Bible translations than ever before. But in many, many ways we still can't seem to love God and neighbor and share how Christ has changed us. There is a church cartoon which pictures the church secretary yelling to the pastor in another room saying, "Pastor, Ripley's Believe It Or Not is on the phone and they want to know if we have a picture of someone who is excited about the Lord..."

The world may seem too big for us right now. Too wicked. The mountain seems too high. We have three main tasks. For me, the immediate goal is not to sing Kum-Ba-Ya around a campfire. The immediate goal for me is to attempt these tasks by first respecting my neighbor. R-E-S-P-E-C-T as Aretha Franklin sang.

Did I ever tell you about the time I went to a Harambe student gathering? Harambe (which means rallying cry in East Africa) is an African American student group. I am a White guy with an Irish background. To say I got some looks would be an understatement. I thought I was being progressive and radical and all-inclusive... but I wasn't. I thought I had the best intentions... but no. I was being invasive because Harambe was a safe place for the students... and in walks super 'with it' whitey. And word travelled fast, let me tell you. In the end I was seen as less of an enemy, but still a threat. And I can respect that. But my supposed act of love was anything but. We have to go back to preschool and start with respecting our neighbors. And in so doing, we love God whose love empowers us to do the impossible. Respect. Cornel West might have described my actions as what he calls 'middle class white people trying to make themselves feel better.' Respect.

In Orthodox Jewish Miami Beach there is an unassuming bagel shop. You would walk right past it if it wasn't for the colorful sign. Otherwise, it is small with a small glass window. But at 5am... the owner starts making bagels... fresh, melt in your hand bagels... and the aroma fills the whole neighborhood.

Are you baking bread? Is your life making fresh bagels every day? Do you love God with all your strength and then use that strength to love others only to share that the reason for your crazy behavior is because you follow a guy named Jesus?

Are you loving others by at least respecting them? It's a start. Are you baking bread in your neighborhood?

Recently, the owner of the bagel shop passed away. As a sign of condolence people wrote the letters 'BDE.' It is a Jewish prayer to those who are grieving: Boruch Dayan Emet. The whole prayer says, 'Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, the True Judge.' I want to love that God and all who are wonderfully made in his image.

Prayer:

The true Judge, the Maker of all that is, the Artist behind all beauty, in whom we live and move and have our being. You have showed us the way. We have not taken it. We repent. We need you. The world needs you. Teach us once again about respect. Once again, Lord, once again. In your mercy. Amen.