

Good People,

Technology has failed me this week. This message comes to you from the keyboard instead of the video screen.

*Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30*

*Jesus said to the crowd, "To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,*

*'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.'*

*For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."*

*At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.*

*"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

Jesus cannot believe the turmoil and disagreement present among the people. They squabble. They cannot see what is plainly in front of them. John came to them as an ancient monk. He refused even the simplest of pleasures and lived lonely existence. The people called him a madman, a psycho. Jesus came drinking and celebrating life with a great variety of men and women surrounding him. They called him a glutton and a drunk.

Can't win with this crowd. When people don't like the message, the first person they attack is the messenger. John the Baptist and Jesus both felt knew this.

"To what will I compare this generation?" Jesus asks himself. A shame he hadn't met us yet. I think he would have found his answer.

We fight over everything and listen to nothing. Even that word *generation* has become part of our battle vocabulary. The young blame the old, the old blame the young. Our recent spread of Covid-19 was placed on the shoulders of the young beach crowd drinking and tanning on the Garden City sand. Certainly irresponsible, and yet every restaurant parking lot was also packed that week. The older generation stuffing masked free faces with shrimp cocktail and hush puppies. OH, if the old could change and the young could listen.

Jesus is not speaking of generations in our terms. In our gospel, he is referring to both young and old. Likewise, when history looks back to us, we will be the people of this decade. Tags like boomer, y, x, and z will matter not. You may find present day blame or excuse in your generational label. History will not care. History will not give you a pass.

Jesus tells us that wisdom is vindicated by her deeds. And so are you. So are we.

It is the deeds of our lives, the things we do, the things we do not do, that define our legacies.

In a way, I am glad that my hard drive imploded at the beach, it erased all memory of a sermon I had written and recorded for you last week. I hated it. It was gloomy and grumpy. It lacked what I have always been taught to include no matter what. Hope. I get a second chance.

I sat on the lawn, Saturday night looking out at the full moon rising over the flooded marsh of Midway Inlet. The municipal fireworks were canceled. Instead, each house took it upon itself to launch color into the sky. They did so with a vigor I have never seen. The yards filled with children. The air filled with promise.

A sudden and instant realization. We are still here. It is never too late for us to change our narrative. Maybe we will be remembered as the generation that fought, the generation that fell apart, the generation that festered until it popped. But maybe ... just maybe will be remembered as the generation that began to transform this country into the land that it should have always been. Maybe we will stand on the shoulders of those voices that cried long before us and begin to build a land where the yoke is easy and burden is light. A land where all people, of all races, and creeds, can find

relief from the storm of life. Perhaps one day, with work, hard work, we will see those fireworks light up the night sky. And with each colorful explosion we will not look back to the past, nor will we yearn for a distant future, but instead we will celebrate our generations work to finalize and complete the promises of this country made so long ago.

*O God, you have taught us to keep all your commandments by loving you and our neighbor: Grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit, that we may be devoted to you with our whole heart, and united to one another with pure affection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*