

The First Presbyterian Church

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PRESBYTERIAN POST



MAY 2020

**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.**

~ Lamentations 3:22-23 ~

From the Desk of the Pastor



*Roll away your [burdens] unto
Yahweh and your thoughts will be
established.*

~ Proverbs 16:3 ~



Health Boundaries for Peace of Heart & Mind

I wrote this article under a rather peculiar circumstance. I have encountered this before when preparing a sermon, but never before when writing an article. What is this peculiar circumstance? It is the sense that someone needs to hear a Word spoken into their life, but I do not know who it is or what is going on. If I did, I would try to craft a message that I thought would be appropriate, hearable, and helpful, without calling attention to the individual. But without knowledge, all I can do is to keep asking our Lord, *Is this what you want me to say? How should I say it? Is this too much/too little?* It is humbling to write an article that does not really come from me. I really hope I don't mess it up. If you find this article to be a *brick*, would you please pray that it would bless the intended reader.

Let me start with a clear stake in the ground, **lives without healthy boundaries are like fragile reeking balls**. They destroy what is around them even as they crush themselves in the process. The Bible is full of guidance on healthy boundaries and Jesus demonstrated healthy boundaries in all sorts of ways throughout his earthly ministry¹. I know there is a lot of popular psychology on healthy boundaries (Google it if you doubt this). Much of what popular psychology has to say seems pretty good, but none of it is true enough. Even when popular psychology seems to align with God's guidance, it lacks moral authority. The authority of pop psychology is that "it works" (when it does work).

¹ I offer only a handful of examples of this in a few footnotes. The examples are to prime the pump of your own thinking about this.

The authority of God's healthy boundaries is vastly different: God designed us; God has perfect knowledge; God is Holy, Holy, Holy; God is the perfecter of my soul. Need I go on. All this is to say, I do not write this article based on some recently read popular self-help book. I wrote this article with a clear sense of compulsion and I reflected only on the Word of God as I thought about it.

I believe that God gives us healthy boundaries to protect us and to allow His Word to pour like a balm into situations of conflict and uncertainty. To say it differently, healthy boundaries are important to the flow of God's comfort and wisdom. There are many approaches that might be taken in discussing healthy boundaries. Because of the short length of this article, I offer the tidiest framework for thinking about healthy boundaries. It starts with three essential questions.

Three Essential Questions: These three questions, when they are answered by God², will protect you from being ensnared in a way that hurts you and fails to help another.

1. **Who owns the problem?** It is always good to know if the problem is yours or someone else's. Be specific in your thinking. Maybe you own some portion of the problem. Maybe you own the consequences of another person's problem. Make sure that you do not let a guilty conscience or the voice of manipulator give you the wrong answer. What does God say?
2. **Who own's the solution?** If you do not own the solution, you probably do not own the problem. If friends are having marital problems, can you actually own the solution? If an adult child is a substance abuser, can you actually own the solution? If a loved one is dying, can you actually own the solution? If you do not own the solution, you probably do not own the problem. And just because you might be able to solve the apparent problem (i.e., giving a student an unearned grade so that they can play in the next game) does not mean that you own the real solution. And, of course, just because you may be able to remedy someone else's immediate

² God's answers are usually found in the Scriptures as illumined by the Holy Spirit and/or through the wise counsel of God's children.

problem, does not make it your problem. Again, what does God have to say about who owns the solution?

3. **What is my role in all this?** In one respect, this is the most important question, because it always applies. In another respect, it is the most important question, because it is here that your God-shaped identity will be tested and proven.³ I may or may not own the problem. I may or may not own the solution. But, as a Christ-followers, I always need to discern what my role ought to be, when someone is suffering. There is no one-size fits all answer to this question. The Bible may not speak clearly to your circumstance. Here the counsel of wise and spiritual friends can help you hear what God may be saying to you.

Boundaries Ought Not To Be Crossed. The word “boundary” is itself helpful. It conjures up the sense that there is a demarcation that ought to be observed and respected. We know that our neighbor ought not to build his/her shed on our property. We know that we ought not to cut down our neighbor’s tree just because we’re tired of raking up leaves that blow into our yard. Boundaries ought not be crossed in ways that hurt us and we ought not to cross boundaries in ways that run roughshod over someone else. This is true for property boundaries and for the emotional/social/connectional boundaries we art talking about in this article.

Jesus had personal needs that he put a priority on — sometimes even over the needs of other people — and he did so without feeling guilty. Primarily his personal soul care had to do with separating himself from people to be alone with God, who he called “Abba” (Papa).

~ Bill Gaultiere ~

There may be a plea for our help. We can answer that plea in any number of ways. The person in need may, in their own way, be asking to be rescued. There is something in this plea to be rescued that triggers the hearts of parents and people who are “fixers.” It is important to remember that help and rescue are not the same thing. Normally, we really cannot rescue someone else. Of course, we could pull someone out of the pool who is drowning and we would call that a “rescue.” But, you can’t rescue a compulsive gambler. You might be able

³ Jesus refused to let the people make him an earthly leader. Luke 5:15-16

to help, but their ruinous compulsion is not your problem and you do not own the solution. And just like helping is not the same as rescuing, enabling is not the same as helping. So consider carefully what role God would have you play before jumping. Again, there is no pat answer, because each situation is unique. It is only with healthy boundaries that one can properly navigate the Word of God and be at rest in the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Benefits of Healthy Boundaries.

1. **Shield from Shame.** One very important benefit of healthy boundaries is that there is no shame in the failures of others. Perhaps a partner has robbed you; perhaps a loved one has betrayed you⁴; perhaps someone in your family has behaved shamefully in public and the entire town knows it. Others may judge you, but they would be wrong. Healthy boundaries create the space for God's healing Word to cocoon us. When our boundaries are ill-defined, it is more difficult to accept God's comfort, as the Evil One torments us with false accusations of guilt. When we have bad boundaries, the accusations sound real because we are occupying some emotional/psychological space that really isn't ours.
2. **Shield from Guilt.** We are not guilty for actions of others, even if they are close friends or close relatives. Others may try to make us feel guilty, but with healthy boundaries, we can ask the Lord to inspect us and to protect us. Much of the world treated the crucified Jesus with contempt for being convicted and sentenced to die on a tree. Jesus knew that his conviction spoke volumes about the judicial process and said nothing about him.
3. **Agent of Tough Love.** We should not go out of our way to be agents of tough love, but sometimes it is the most helpful thing we can do. What examples of Jesus exercising tough love come to mind for you? Some will judge us for not "helping" in the way they think is best or in the way they

⁴ Jesus' family tried to get him to give up his ministry and they did this in a public setting. Matthew 12:46-50

think they would have helped if it had been their friend or relative. This is where discerning God's will is vital⁵. Tough love is not selfish; it is love.

4. **Fulfilled Lives.** My life verse comes from Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. In John 17:4 Jesus says, "I have glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished all that you have given me to do." I claim this verse as a promise to me; I can accomplish everything God gives me to accomplish in my lifetime. But, for this to be true, I need to listen to God to discern what it is God wants me to do AND I need to listen to God to discern what it is I am not supposed to do. There are many things Jesus left undone. The same is true of every human life. Leaving important things left undone, even when the world (and the church) pressures you to participate, takes a lot of discernment. That discernment is nearly impossible when suffering from unhealthy boundaries and you take ownership of every need you encounter.

There is so much more that could be said about biblical healthy boundaries, but this is a tidy little way to introduce the topic. If you desire to talk about this some more, please let me know. Remember what God says, *Don't be a recking ball and don't be battered by one.*

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

~ John 10:10 ~

⁵ Jesus told the rich man what he needed to do for him to be Saved. At the moment the rich man sorrowed over Jesus's answer. Jesus did not coddle him; Jesus spoke truth in love. Matthew 19:16-21

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MAY BIRTHDAYS

MAY 2	Pastor Bruce
MAY 3	Bill Karns
MAY 5	Julie Owens Korbeck
MAY 9	Donovan Gates
MAY 10	Bob Jones
MAY 15	Emily Jones
MAY 16	Sara Gates
MAY 25	Lois Owens

SHUT INS

Our shut ins need to hear from us now more than ever during the isolation of the Covid 19 pandemic. Although an in person visit is not possible at this time, a phone call or card. would go a long way in helping ease their loneliness. Need an address for a shut in, feel free to contact Darla Kennell at 607-382-3099.

CALENDAR OMITTED THIS ISSUE (AGAIN)

Due to the quarantine being in effect at least until May 15th, there is no calendar printed for this issue of the Newsletter.



MAY ANNIVERSARIES

MAY 6	Dan and Barb Moore
MAY 14	Stan and Diane Ells



ELEVATOR SCHEDULE

**TO BE DETERMINED WHEN THE
QUARANTINE IS LIFTED.**



CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

Christian sympathy is extended to the family of Frank Owens on his passing.

Christian sympathy is extended to the family of Bill Jones on his passing.

Christian sympathy is extended to the family of Karen Fitzgerald on her passing.

Christian sympathy is extended to the family of Kathy Kemp Doan on her passing. Kathy was the oldest daughter of Janice Ludwig.

NEWS AND NOTES

MISSION COMMITTEE NEWS

Our committee is keeping in touch by e-mail and phone. A decision is being made each month on where to donate. In March we gave \$250 to the FLM Radio Ministry in Bath, NY. In the month of April, our donation of \$250 went to the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. In May, our donation will be to Turning Point of Hornell in the amount of \$250 specified for food. Donations are made to Local Mission projects. If someone has a suggestion, please let one of our members know and we will consider it.

Lorraine Glidden, Chair; Linda Schroeder, Jean Gates, Pat Nephew, and Cathi VanIlderstine.

PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS

Once again, we want to address the issue of our finances during this lock down. The expenses continue on schedule even if we are not meeting in person to worship together. In a service of worship, collection of offerings is rightly taken up after the sermon as a faith response to the hearing of the Word. But these are disrupted and disruptive times. For those who are able to do so, it would be appreciated if you would mail in your pledges and offerings to Loretta Crossett, our Financial Secretary. You may mail them to the church at Arkport Presbyterian Church, ATTN Loretta Crossett, PO Box 6, Arkport, NY 14807 or you may mail them to Loretta's home at Loretta Crossett, 715 Crossett Road, Arkport, NY 14807. Thank you for your understanding and support.

APC ORGANIST ARTICLE

The following article was provided by Lorraine Glidden. It appeared in the Evening Tribune in the 1960's. For those who might not know, Walter Sherner who is featured in the article, was Audrey Whiteman's uncle. When asked about her Uncle Walt, Audrey said she had many fond memories of visiting her uncle when she was a child and of him playing the organ. Thank you to Lorraine for providing the article.

Arkport Organist Looks Back Over 41 Years at Keyboard

By Ray Hamilton
Area Editor

ARKPORT—"Ever since I was a boy, a keyboard has fascinated me," says Walter Sherner of Arkport.

Sherner has been organist at the Arkport Presbyterian Church more than 41 years. He is fascinated by his task more than ever since the church installed a new organ a few weeks ago.

A native of Arkport, Sherner is the clerk of the Steuben County Board of Co-operative Educational Services with offices in Bath.

He has been active in the church since boyhood. He was ordained an elder in the church in 1928 and became the treasurer in 1929. He was a trustee for nine years and served as Sunday School superintendent for four years.

In addition to his church duties, Sherner is also the village treasurer and a charter member of the Arkport Exchange Club.

Sherner is proud of the fact that the church has had only two organists in the last 80 years. Before him, William Hurlbut was organist for about 40 years.

As a boy, Sherner had "a few" piano lessons, but little formal training. He didn't start playing the organ until several years after he graduated from high school.

Mrs. Willard Bronson of Hornell instructed him on the piano several years ago and Mrs. William Perry, the wife of the Rev. William Perry of Almond, and Howard Arnold of Christ Episcopal Church in Hornell also helped him on the organ.

Sherner says that he cannot play by ear. He reads music and always follows the score.

He always has practiced several hours a week, but since the church acquired the new organ, he now practices "not less than one hour a day and often more than that."

Sherner says that after playing in front of the congregation for over 41 years he still gets nervous. His piano teacher when he was a boy said that "if you know your lesson, you won't get nervous," but it happens once in awhile.

Sherner's eyes light up with



Walter Sherner of 19 Oak Hill St., Arkport, is shown practicing on the new electronic organ at the Arkport Presbyterian Church. Sherner has been organist at the church for over 41 years.

a smile when he tells of an embarrassing moment that occurred a few weeks ago. Each Sunday he practices for about an hour before the worship service, then switches on the outside speakers so that the carillon of the new organ can be heard outside.

On this Sunday, he forgot to turn off the outside speakers when he resumed practicing. As he says, "The new organ has a lot of oomph," and it could be heard for quite a way.

The new organ that Sherner

enjoys so much is an electronic Rodgers 32-B with three keyboards and full pedals, meeting the standards of the American Guild of Organists.

It was donated by Dr. and Mrs. Paul Wolfgruber of Arkport in memory of their son, Paul C. Wolfgruber. The sanctuary of the church was re-decorated at the same time.

The renovation included rebuilding of the chancel, replastering, a new ceiling, wire and lights, carpeting and refinishing of the floor.