

Gardner Newsletter

Volume 19

~ Issue 76 ~

Fall 2016

Pastor Dan Whitney Talks About Our Christian Values in the Wake of the Last Election

(In the following insightful homily, Pastor Dan Whitney shows us all how to rise (like the proverbial Phoenix) above the rancorous ashes of our country's latest election.)

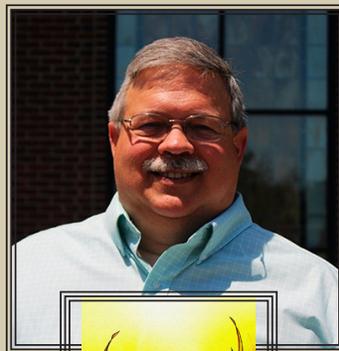
How much does your reaction to "the things that happen around you" tell you about the person you are?

In other words . . . are you who you are because you choose to be a certain person based on internal principles? Or are you **so** shaped by other people and circumstances, that they get to determine who you are?

Kids learn to push their parent's buttons. If a kid wants a desired response, he learns that he can do a certain thing and usually get a predictable response. If this is true, he has some measure of control over his parent.

I learned in about 7th grade that I could control my Latin teacher. All I had to do was to bring up the subject of my inability to understand something in the homework the night before, and he would launch into a tirade about turning off the TV and focusing on my work . . . which would lead to a discussion about the merits of life in the old country versus modern living and the disrespect kids had for adults these days.

I could derail the lesson for a good fifteen minutes. And that wasn't the only trigger he had. My friends and I could plan to keep him off track for huge quantities of time, which entertained us and kept us from getting



more work, we un-the old



home-since didn't yet derstand stuff.

Mr Zajac was controlled by external forces, manipulating his flash points.

I am sure we are not like that.

We know who we are and what our values are. We do not let ourselves be easily led off the track. We determine our own mood for the day and the enthusiasm with which we greet

the dawn. We are folks on a mission, and we are engaged in doing the work of the Kingdom with joy, because we know that our labor for the Lord is not in vain, and is accomplishing something.

This approach to life is anchored in Phil 4:4-7

Phil 4:4-7

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

We are the folks who rejoice in the Lord!

We are the folks who are gentle . . . gentle as opposed to strident or loud, or coercive, or forceful or manipulative or arrogant or prideful. We are the gentle folks.

We don't abandon hope when things get tough, because we are relying on a great God.

This great God of ours hears our prayers, provides what we need, and places us in a caring family. And

Gardner Newsletter

2

Volume 19

~ Issue 76 ~

Fall 2016

REMINDER!

Gardner Cousins reunion

474 Gore Rd N
Morgan, VT, United States

All-day

Starts Jul 2, 2017 1:00 PM

Ends 5:00 PM

HAPPY 99TH BIRTHDAY TO AUNT LOIS



Aunt Beulah, Aunt Lois, Uncle Raymond



The Cake



Josh reading the story of the "wired outhouse"



Aunt Lois, Uncle Raymond, Cousin Gloria



Dick and Sandy Baraw of the Lang-Johnson-Eggleston Connection



Cousins Gloria, Diane, Becky



Aunt Lois' Gift Basket



Mistress of Ceremonies, Cousin Teresa Vasko



Sisters Beulah Griffes, Lois Cardwell



99 YEARS!

Gardner Newsletter

3

Volume 19

~ Issue 76 ~

Fall 2016

Aunt Beulah is a Great Grandmother!
Congratulations to Emily and Zac Nuse and Welcome,
Katherine Jane Nuse

Introducing Katherine Jane Nuse! She was born at 8:37 pm on 11/23, 6 lbs 11 oz, 19.5 inches long. She's healthy and we're both doing great!

From Uncle Josh!

Meet my niece Katherine Jane Nuse! I may be biased, but she's the most beautiful person I've ever seen! I'm ridiculously excited to be an uncle! Thanks [Emily](#) and Zac!

From Mom Emily!

My favorite picture so far... Proud daddy {Zac} and his baby girl @ zacharynuse



Proud Dad and His Baby Girl



First "Official" Nuse Family Portrait



Mom Emily and Baby Katherine



Beaming Uncle Josh and Niece Katherine

Gardner Newsletter

4

Volume 19

~ Issue 76 ~

Fall 2016

Continued from Page 1

knowing this great God hears us and responds to us and places us in a family -- all of that translates to peace in our hearts.

That is the promise of the scripture, isn't it?

So we rejoice. We are gentle, we don't worry, we take our concerns to God, and we let His peace control our lives . . . **except in an election year.**

I learned this week that there is a grand old tradition in New England . . . the tradition of an Election Day sermon.

I think I would like to preach a brief Election Day sermon today, but before I do, I think I need to remind us all of who we are, and who gets to decide who we are.

Our Forefathers famously wrote, in the Declaration of Independence, that . . .

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that **all men are created equal**, that they are **endowed by their Creator** with certain unalienable rights, that among these are **Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.**"*

Those illustrious gentlemen got a lot of things right, but they also got some things wrong.

1. First off, they didn't really mean "all men" when they wrote this. Some of them meant white men. And they didn't mean women. We corrected that error over time.
2. They were correct in affirming that these rights of ours were not granted to us, are not granted to us, by the government of any nation, but by our Creator. And these rights are a good model for civil governments to follow.
3. But the defining RIGHTS of the Kingdom of God

are much, much different. The government of our nation exists to allow us to pursue happiness in any legal way we like. Christians live by a different creed.

Christians have agreed to a lifestyle where they imitate their master, Jesus Christ, and carry out that imitation by being in constant communication with the Holy Spirit who serves as a coach to keep us on track.

The government exists to protect our right to pursue happiness. In the Kingdom, Jesus says, If anyone wants to follow me, they must deny themselves, pick up their crosses and follow me.

Do you see how there are two very different ethics involved?

I read this week a sermon preached by Rev. Daniel Foster in 1790, preached in Massachusetts to John Hancock, Governor, Samuel Adams, Lt. Gov., and both houses of the legislature and others assembled.

This is part of a tradition of Election Day Sermons designed to remind people who they were and what their responsibilities were. The goal of these sermons was this:

In all civic actions, voters and rulers were charged to promote virtue, suppress vice and support people of "proven wisdom, integrity, justice, and holiness."

I won't list the responsibilities of the candidates, because it is hard to believe that our current candidates would embrace many of them. Moreover, none of us are candidates on the ballot, so there are no candidates here today (or reading this) to remind of their duty.

But I will list the responsibilities of the **people** – because



Continued on Page 6

Gardner Newsletter



Volume 19

~ Issue 76 ~

Fall 2016

Bunny Maria says goodbye to Tony



Tony and Bunny 2014



Amr and Bunny



Charlene and Amr



Steven and Charles



Paula and Jim

Bunny Maria is “The Original Gang of Ten’s” first cousin on their mother’s side. More specifically, Bunny’s mother, Aunt Laura, was Grandma Gardner’s sister. Many of you will recall that Aunt Laura ran an iconic vegetable stand in Stow, MA for many, many years.

On November 4th, family and friends gathered at St. Bridget’s Church in Maynard, MA to celebrate the life of Tony Maria, Bunny’s husband of 63 years.

Tony worked for the Maynard school system and was a well-respected role model for everyone who worked at or attended those schools.

You can see the program of Tony’s memorial service by clicking on this link (http://www.gardnernews.org/bunny_and_tony's_50th_an-

[niversary.htm](#)) from the *Gardner Newsletter* website.

Bunny and Tony have been mentioned in *Gardner News* a couple of times, most notably in Issue 23, Volume 6, Summer 2003, when *Gardner News* celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and they participated in an exclusive interview.

They appeared again for Bunny’s 84th birthday in Issue 67, Volume 17, Summer 2014. All of these back issues are available on the *Gardner News* website.

Bunny’s new address is:

Wingate at Sudbury, 136 Boston Post Road, Room 214, Sudbury MA 01776.

Bunny’s cell phone number is (978) 760-3969.

Gardner Newsletter

6

Volume 19

~ Issue 76 ~

Fall 2016

Continued from Page 4

I think that **our responsibilities are not changed by who gets elected.** Our responsibilities stay the same no matter who sits behind the desks of power:

According to Rev. Foster:

1. It is their (our) duty to pray for them.
2. It is the duty of the people to support their rulers.

You might say, "But, but, what if so and so gets elected. . ."

No, Foster's words are from Scripture. We pray for all our rulers. We support our rulers, cooperating with all that is virtuous.

Don't have to agree with them.

Don't have to support their policies.

We can work to get them unelected if we disagree.

But what we cannot do is allow them to change us into different people.

Our identity must come from the principles of scripture and the leadership of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

We are a people of joy. We are a people of gentleness. We are a people who reject anxiety, because our trust is in God. We are a people of peace.

And if we cease to be people like that, our enemies have distorted the image of Christ in us, and made us useless to the Kingdom of God.

But, pastor, (you may say) this election matters! You don't understand how important it is!

But friend, (I would say) the KOG matters more! You don't understand how important that is!

Revelation 21 1- 5 (NIV)

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

God is transforming everything. There is a destination to history, and we need to prepare for it.

Our witness to the character and person of Christ, specifically our ability to reflect the image of Christ, is our main strategy for engaging people in conversations about the Kingdom of God.

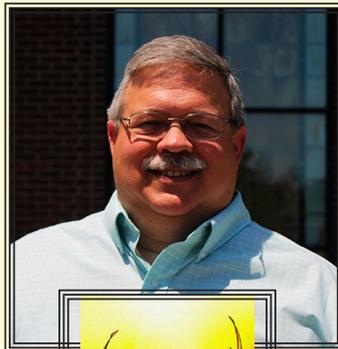
If our election politics make it impossible for us to reflect the image of Christ, then the election has rendered us useless to the Kingdom of God.

Talk about pushing our buttons!

If all someone has to do to get you enraged is say that they are voting for a candidate other than the one you think is best . . .

If the moment you find out that someone is voting for someone other than the person you think is best, you write them off, label them stupid or unchristian, then you are allowing them to determine who you are going to be. All anyone has to do to get you to act in an unchristian way is to defend an opposing candidate in your presence.

Are we so easily led astray?



Continued on Page 7

Gardner Newsletter

7

Volume 19

~ Issue 76 ~

Fall 2016

Continued from Page 6

Is our image of “who a Christian is supposed to be” so weak, so uncertain, that it only takes a little political anxiety to help us completely forget our Christian mission and commitment?

Don't give folks that much power over you or your influence.

This isn't a new problem. John Wesley said in 1774

“I met those of our society who had votes in the ensuing election, and advised them:

- 1) To vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy.
- 2) To speak no evil of the person they voted against.
- 3) To take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side.”

People have been getting excited about elections for years.

And I am not saying you can't be passionate about your candidate.

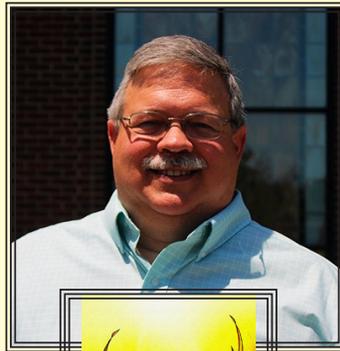
I'm just saying, **don't forget who you are**, who Christians are called to be, and don't forget the goal and purpose of everything.

We are a people of joy. We are a people of gentleness. We are a people who reject anxiety, because our trust is in God. We are a people of peace.

Secular politics don't usher in the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God lives within us, and history is headed in a direction.

God, who by the Holy Spirit already lives within His people, will create everything new. His dwelling will be with us. We, who reflect his image,



will fellowship with for new and on



live in lowship Him ever. A heaven earth are the way.

If you keep reading the passage from “Revelation,” judgment follows this new creation . . .

Don't forget about judgement.

You think this election is important? What about judgment? What about eternal judgment?

If the way you witness to Christ is linked to the potential opportunity that others have to enter the Kingdom of God, how important is it **to NOT let the current political climate injure your witness** to the character of Christ?

We are a people of joy. We are a people of gentleness. We are a people who reject anxiety, because our trust is in God. We are a people of peace.

Please, I am not saying that you shouldn't participate in this election. I want righteous people everywhere to participate, the more the better.

I am not saying that politics isn't important. It clearly is. It matters that we elect leaders who will pursue justice and compassion.

I'm not saying that we Christians never lose our cool or that we always are even-keeled and temperamentally balanced. But when we lose it, we recognize that we are off the mark, we repent and we ask the Holy Spirit to help us regain our balance and perspective.

I **am** saying that, We are not slanderers or libelers. We don't repeat gossip, whether verbally or on social media. We have this saying among us, we Christians . . . “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

Why are we like this?

Because first of all, we have been bought with a price.

We are like this . . .

- Because of all that Christ has done for us

Continued on Page 8

Gardner Newsletter



Volume 19

~ Issue 76 ~

Fall 2016

Continued from Page 7

- Because we are convinced that Jesus is Lord and He is working His purpose out
- Because we are convinced that human history is headed in a certain direction
- Because we are convinced that people are making life and death, heaven and hell choices every day

We are a people of joy. We are a people of gentleness. We are a people who reject anxiety, because our trust is in God. We are a people of peace.

I'm confused about the people who say that they are moving to Canada if Hillary or Donald gets elected.

Does Donald or Hillary have the

power to separate you from your mission assignment in your community?

Does Hillary or Donald have the power to remove your Christian witness from your neighbors, built up these many years?

Does Donald or Hillary have the power to negate your Christian influence at your workplace?

Does Hillary or Donald have the power to determine your outlook on the upcoming day?

Our identity runs much deeper than all of this!

We are people of the covenant.

"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

We are people born out of the waters of baptism, nourished by the

bread and the cup, the body and blood of our Savior.

We are people on a mission. We are men and women of righteousness, compassion, justice, tempered by mercy.

We are a people of joy. We are a people of gentleness. We are a people who reject anxiety, because our trust is in God. We are a people of peace.

You have been summoned to a higher calling.

We are the people of God. With faces glowing, reflecting the glory of the God who saved us, we go out to proclaim the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that everyone in the world may know the love God has for them.

If God is love, we, too, must be people of love, not just for some, but for everyone. How ya doing at that?

See you this winter in 2017!
Please send in your articles

Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year

