

The Rev'd John H. Bonner III  
The Church of the Holy Trinity  
Hertford, NC

RCL Year A (Proper 25) – October 26, 2008

### Proper 25 A

Jesus came to CHANGE THE PRICE TAGS!!!

Brilliant Plan = break into basement of local 5&10cent store not to rob but to change the Price Tags... "Mischief Night" October 30<sup>th</sup> every year community braced itself against all sorts of petty 'crimes' (soaping windows, letting air out of tires, etc.) annoying mischief...

Satan has turned the Price Tags on us... Love of another means little or nothing ...make great sacrifices for something with no long term value...

What is Really Important?

Can we give attention to our families; our work; our church; personal relationships...

UNC ... 50 people over age of 95 ...What would you have done differently?

1. If I had it to do over again, *I would reflect more.*
2. If I had it to do over again, *I would risk more.*
3. If I had it to do over again, *I would do more things that would live on after I am dead.*

### REFLECT

How well have you loved?

Measure of a Disciple:

Not worship, nor biblical knowledge, nor wisdom/insight, nor moral uprightness, nor eloquence, nor preaching, nor buildings and budgets...IT WOULD BE BY THEIR LOVE! "I give you a new commandment that you LOVE one another..."

"Our Town" by Thornton Wilder

Key character dies, Emily, in childbirth. She is given the chance to come back for one day and she chooses her 12<sup>th</sup> birthday. She is angry at those who are wasting precious time. She turns to the audience and says: "Do any of you ever really live life while you're living it?"

How our precious times slip by...

Love more...Work at it

Jesus earthly ministry ends on this note: **Love God and Love your Neighbor...**

Reflect on the Living Presence of Christ within you...Jesus equips us today to live with an intensity that is essential to REAL LIFE ... "Abundant Life"

### RISK TAKING

**Break the mold** that Society casts for you...Risk gives you evidence that you are special... God intends this for you....

To 95 year olds what mattered was the risks taken and NOT taken...wished they had taken MORE...

Biblical examples are too numerous to mention ...  
Greatest is Abraham who at age 100 accepted God's challenge to move and take Sarah his wife and start a new life.... Today we read of Moses who did not get in to the Promised Land but viewed it after his long journey with God...

Promised Land belongs to those who take the risk...give everything... who listen to the inner voice of the Holy Spirit and ACT on that HEARING!

One cannot devote life to Safety and expect God's richest blessings...

God calls us daily to love Him and our Neighbor (not the easy 'neighbor' but the challenging one) It is never too late to have visions of significant service...

Jesus is waiting to be loved, known and followed...

Jesus equips us, the saints, and the baptized, to take the risks necessary to live into God's life for us... Few of us know that life for we are hesitant in everything...

Jesus message today is Love Your Neighbor ... with Him we can Risk Love

### **Doing things that Last**

**Everyone wants to do** something that has lasting significance... Young give little thought to their significance but in the face of life's end questions of significance loom large...

CPE ... Visited African American Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

Students came forward to give congregation reports of how their education experiences have been going. It is an important day in this Church...

On this Sunday the Preacher got up and said a few closing words:

"Children, you are going to die! You may not think you are going to die. But you are going to die. One of these days, they are going to take you out to the cemetery, drop you in a hole, throw some dirt on your face, and go back to the church and eat potato salad."

When you were born, you alone were crying and everybody else was happy. The important question I want to ask is this: When you die are you alone going to be happy, leaving everybody else crying? The answer depends on whether you live to get titles or you live to get testimonies. When they lay you in the grave, are people going to stand around reciting the fancy titles you earned, or are they going to stand around giving testimonies of the good things you did for them? Will they list your degrees and awards, or will they tell about what a blessing you were to them? Will you leave behind just a newspaper column telling people how important you were, or will you leave crying people who give testimonies of how they have lost the best friend they ever had? There's nothing wrong with titles. Titles are good things to have. But if it ever comes down to a choice between a title or a testimony ... go for the testimony."

He was just getting warmed up! Black preaching is a special event always. Rev. Jones went through the Bible talking about those people who had titles and the ones who

had testimonies. He rhythmically shouted his sermon, each line stronger than the one before: Pharaoh may have had the title...But Moses had the testimony! Nebuchadnezzar may have had the title...But Daniel had the testimony! Queen Jezebel may have had the title...But Elijah had the testimony!

He went on and on through scripture citing on the one hand Biblical characters who had power and prestige, and on the other, the people of God whose lives were testimonies of loving service. The people were wound up and giving resounding feedback. When he got to the climax of the message he practically screamed, "Pilate may have had the title"...then a long pause ... But My JESUS had the testimony!"

The 95 year olds would have approved and known this message well. They remind us that it is the loving things we do for people that eventually prove to be the most memorable in this life.