First United Methodist Church of Springboro

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Restoration In Process: “Restored For…”

Matthew 7:24-27 and Galatians 5:1-6

 It’s still the season of the Holy Spirit, a season of growing and going deeper in our faith. But this weekend we are beginning a new series around the theme of restoration and the way God is working to restore us at all levels, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, relationally, physically, and in community. God created us in delight, in love, placing his very image within us, calling us good.

 But life comes along and it wears us out. We get run down. We get stuck in sin. We neglect that image of God within. We distance ourselves from the source of hope and suddenly find we cannot see the original God breathed beauty and value within us or others. We forget that we are God’s workmanship, created in love for good.

 As we come to God in faith, this truth is renewed in us. The Holy Spirit begins to find space and work within us, restoring us. And as we are restored, we become a part of God’s work of restoring our world.

 Our passage from Matthew is the parable of the wise and foolish builders. In it, Jesus uses a house as a metaphor for a person’s life. Both houses might be beautiful. Both might have fantastic views. But only one holds up in the storms of life. It is the one built on the foundation of rock—the strong foundation of faith and the truth of God’s word.

 So thinking about this idea of life as a house, and how God is in the restoration business, my ears pricked up and my mind started running when Rebecca and Kim were sharing with me about one of their favorite shows, Rehab Addict on HGTV.

 The host goes in to houses that are in bad shape from neglect, lack of style, age, and restores them to their original beauty with a little touch of today. Isn’t that such a great image for what God does in our lives?

 First, he searches for us, God seeks us out. Then, God buys us back..from sin, from all that would destroy us. The purchase price is steep, the death of his beloved son. But he knows we are worth it. He knows who designed and built us, a master architect who does flawless work, capable of lasting to eternity.

 And then he begins the restoration process. First, the foundation, then gutting the old stuff, then putting in the new.

 There’s a video clip about their work on a house in Wisconsin that was completely transformed. I invite you to watch it, thinking not just about what one person and a great community can do, but remembering God’s power to restore in our lives and world when we turn things over to him.

 <http://www.hgtv.com/shows/rehab-addict/rehab-addict-on-hgtv-home-renovations-videos>

 What an amazing transformation. God does this within our lives and our world…only on a God size level.

 Think for a minute about the difference one restored house makes, and the difference one almost condemned house makes. Just one house has a significant impact on the others around it.

 This helps us to think about what it is that we are restored for. We are restored for a greater purpose.

 Often we focus in our faith on the amazing fact that God has bought us through the death of his son. This is an amazing and wonderful thing. But think of a neighborhood with a house in the shape this one was. Someone buying it is only a good thing if they are also going to restore it. If it stays the same or gets worse, it doesn’t really matter who the owner it.

 The house is bought so that it can be restored for a purpose—for life in community. The house is restored so that it can be a home for someone, a place to love, laugh, cry, pray, grow.

 God restores us so that we might be a dwelling place for his Spirit, and so that our lives might be a place of love, laughter, blessing, and compassion. And so that we might be strengthened to grow and work with God in restoring creation to its original beauty and wholeness.

 Remember the verse from last week from Romans, “All creation waits for the redemption, or the restoration”…with eager expectation, or, “on tippy toes.”

 We get to be like those neighbors. First, taking care of our house and then seeing the potential, the intrinsic value and beauty of others and drawing it out, helping to restore it.

 Those neighbors saw more than an eyesore, a problem. They saw possibility. They all did their part to help out. And everyone was blessed as a result.

 This is the weekend we remember our freedoms as a nation. Paul reminds us in Galatians for our freedom in Jesus Christ. He reminds us we are not just free from sin, but we are free for.

 Freedom is a gift to be used and shared. It comes with a price, but also with responsibility.

 He reminds us in Galatians, we are, in Jesus Christ, free from hell, death, sin, the things of this world that harm and weigh heavy upon us. We are free for a life of love, free so that we can live a life of joy, hope, blessing, a life of seeing as God sees and doing God’s work.

 So this weekend, remember you are free, not just because of the country that you live in, but in a way much deeper, that lasts eternally, that no one on this earth can take away from you. Know that you have been bought with a great price, and then let God invest his amazing resources in you, to build up the foundation of faith, hope and love in your life, to rip out the hurt, pain, and ugliness that has built up within you over the years. Let God rebuild and restore you. And then begin to work with God to restore, rebuild, and renew our world for community, blessing, and love.