

# Menifee United Church of Christ

Established in 1962 by God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit

## SERMON FOR

February 22, 2015

*“God Will Never Forget You”*



Reverend Bill Freeman: Senior Minister  
Eckart Seeber: Music Minister  
Marie Paulus-Nyquist: Children's Minister  
Ginny Sherwood: Lay Reader

## ***Menifee United Church of Christ***

*Sunday Service and Sunday School 10 AM*

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***Live Life Fully Alive!***

### **1 Peter 3:18-20**

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight people, were saved through water.

### **Genesis 9:12-16**

God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.’

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*“God Will Never Forget You”*

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A guy is looking for a parking space in a crowded mall parking lot. He’s been looking for many minutes. Finally he prays to God. He says, “God, if you’ll find me a parking space, I will follow you forever.” Just then, a parking space opens up. The guy says, “Oh never mind, God. I found a parking space on my own.”

God will never forget you. That’s what I want to talk with you about today. God will never forget you. Whether you’re looking for a parking space. Whether you’re looking for a job. Whether

you're looking for a significant other. God will never forget you. If your life has been full of successes. If your life has been full of setbacks. If your life has been a mixture of successes and setbacks. God will never forget you. If you're healthy as a horse. If you're sick as a dog. If you're healthy one week and sick the next. God will never forget you.

I remember one time when I was a kid climbing a tree in my aunt's backyard. I fell out of the tree onto my back. I only fell about three feet or so, but it knocked the wind out of me. And I remember thinking: Why didn't God prevent me from falling out of that tree? I don't know. Maybe because God knew I'd need an illustration for a sermon 50 years later. The good news is, since then, God has kept me from falling so many times. And whenever I have fallen, God has helped me up. When you've fallen, has God ever helped you up? I'll bet God has helped up many people here when they've fallen. That's what God does. If we'll let God do it. God will help you up. And God will never forget you. I know that, because the Bible tells me so.

Noah's story in the Bible was beautiful...when we were kids. God tells Noah to build a huge ark, to put his family on the ark, and to put the animals on the ark, two by two. And he does. Then God sends rain on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. Then everybody gets off the ark. Oh happy day. It was a beautiful story...when we were kids. Then as adults we say: Wait a minute. What happened to all the other humans and animals on the earth that were caught in the flood? Then we realize: Oh, they all died. Eew. But then we read that God has made a new covenant with all the humans and animals. Never again will God send a flood to kill nearly all the humans and animals on the planet. God put a rainbow in the clouds to remind God never again to send a flood to kill nearly all the humans and animals on the planet. I don't believe God was giving God's self a loophole by saying God will never again send a flood to kill

nearly all the humans and animals on the planet. And I don't believe God will send something else to kill nearly all the humans and animals on the planet. I believe that when God sees a rainbow: God will never forget you.

Jesus on the cross said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But then Peter reminds us that God did not forsake Jesus. Peter says, "He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit." Peter says, Jesus, "has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him." God did not forsake Jesus. And God will never forget Jesus. God will not forsake you. And God will never forget you.

Mark tells us that at Jesus' baptism, "just as he was coming up out of the water," Jesus, "saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him." Then Mark says, "a voice came from heaven," saying, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Jesus is God's Son, the Beloved; with whom God is well pleased. God will always love Jesus. And God will never forget Jesus. You are God's Child, the Beloved; with whom God is well pleased. God will always love you. And God will never forget you.

The Psalmist knows all about God's love. The Psalmist says, "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust." You can trust God. You can trust God with your life. You can trust God with your soul. You can trust God for all eternity. Because God loves you. And God will never forget you. Say to those around you: God will never forget you, God will never forget you, God will never forget you.

Arpad is a member of this congregation. Arpad has no doubt that God loves him. Arpad has no doubt that God will never forget him. Arpad's awareness of God's love for him began in the

middle of the last century. Arpad was a prisoner of the KGB in Hungary. He was tortured. He was nearly killed. But during all that time, Arpad was certain that he was abiding in God love. And he's even more certain of it today. God loves Arpad. And God will never forget Arpad. God loves you. And God will never forget you.

Henry is a man who lives near where I do. I met Henry the other day. Henry said that his wife left him many years ago for another man. Henry also said that his wife left him many years ago and left him to care for their three children, ages one-and-a-half to five. Henry said that he didn't think that he could make it. But then he prayed to God for help. And God told him: I'll help you. Henry said he heard God say those words: I'll help you. Henry said God did help him back then, and God has helped him all these many years since. Henry is re-married and enjoying life. God loves Henry. And God will never forget Henry. God loves you. And God will never forget you.

Ash Wednesday was this past week. Rex Wignall, the minister at the United Methodist Church, and I did a joint Ash Wednesday service at his church. We took ashes and made crosses on the foreheads of about 50 people. Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is a reminder to us to look at our lives during the 6 1/2 weeks of Lent. How are we doing sharing the love of God, following the teachings of Jesus, and listening to the Holy Spirit? We ponder all that during Lent. Ash Wednesday is also a reminder that we came from dust and we will return to dust. The Good News, The God News, is that, even though you will return to dust, your spirit will live on for all eternity. Because God loves you. And because God will never forget you.

My first job out of college was as the news director of a Christian radio station in Michigan. For about an hour every afternoon, I played Christian hymns on the station. One of my favorite

hymns to play was Ethel Waters singing, “His Eye Is On The Sparrow.” Ethel Waters sings, “His eye is on the sparrow, so I know he watches me.” I know God watches you. I know God loves you. And I know God will never forget you.

Let us pray...

*God of Love,  
Help us to know that you love us.  
Help us to know that you will always love us.  
And help us to know that you will never forget us.  
Now and forevermore.  
By the power of the Holy Spirit.  
And in the name of Jesus.  
Amen*



*Meniffee  
United Church of Christ*



*Whoever you are,  
Wherever you are on life's journey  
You are welcome here!*

*Jesus didn't reject people  
Neither do we*



## THE GOLDEN RULE

*What is hateful to you  
do not do to others.*  
Judaism

*Do to others what you would  
have them do to you.*  
Christianity

*None of you believes until he wishes for his  
brother what he wishes for himself.*  
Islam

*Do not do to others  
what would cause pain if done to you.*  
Hinduism

*Hurt not others in ways that you yourself  
would find hurtful.*  
Buddism

*Regard your neighbor's gain as your gain,  
and your neighbor's loss as your loss.*  
Taoism

*Do not do to others  
what you do not want them to do to you.*  
Confucianism

*Treat other people  
as you'd want to be treated in their situation.*  
Humanism