

# FAITH

**O** “You can write it” he said.

**R** That is what reporter Caleb Soptelean said when I asked about whether the West Shore News ever does a “Faith Forum” column in the paper. I guess it is true, you better be careful about what you ask for.

**U** When I pressed Mr. Soptelean a little further about what the West Shore News readers might be interested in reading from a pastor like myself, he said that they were looking for “practical Christianity, you know basic sorts of stuff.” Ok, I thought and agreed to take on the task, but

**M** then I wondered, what exactly does practical Christianity mean?

Well, according to the dictionary practical means: of, pertaining to, or concerned with ordinary activities, business or work. In other words, as I hear it, the routine aspects of life. In this context then it would mean those ordinary things about what it means to be a Christian, what it looks like to live a life of faith. And it then occurred to me that therein lies a problem, what it means to be a person of faith has often become a little too ordinary, too routine, too practical in our world today.

As Christians we follow a man born in Bethlehem to a single, unwed mother. He would gather the unclean, the outcast, the poor, the vulnerable, the broken, the sinful, the blind and the lame, and then when they gathered, he would freely forgive, feed, heal and grace them with the love of God. He refused to back down in the face of oppressive high-ranking leaders and would eventually challenge the status quo of his world by confronting the religious and ruling elite. And to thank him, the world crucified him. In short, there is nothing practical about what Jesus came to do or who Jesus, the Son of God, was in the world. So what does it mean for us then, who follow him all these many, many years later?

It means that faithful living is best seen in some of the extraordinary moments we often miss. Moments like the working mom that spends her afternoons and evenings fully committed to her school aged son’s activities while her husband works in North Dakota. Moments like the grandparents who step forward to provide for their grandson due to family circumstances beyond their control and now find themselves, in their retirement years, again helping a child become an adult. And moments like new members, and long-time residents, in this West Shore community stepping forward and assisting the West Shore Food Bank feed those who are in need.

These moments, ordinary yet extraordinary, are what “practical” Christianity is about. These are the places where what it means to be a follower of Christ comes alive. I look forward to sharing this sort of “practical” Christianity with you through this Faith Forum and welcome you to share your thoughts with me as well.

In peace,  
Pastor Andy

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