

# COLLOQUIES with Pastor Brian

## We Always Want You Back!

**D**o you ever want a moment back? A time or a place where you said or did something and in retrospect thought, “Oh, I don’t think I woulda done that.” I hear that voice right now as I glance at the lectionary and notice I paired it with the Jackson 5’s “I Want You Back”. Ugh, why did I do that?

Maybe you can see where I was going after reading the fifth chapter of Matthew. Specifically, Matthew 5:21-37 contains a list Jesus reminds his listeners they have heard before. “You have heard it said...” he offers repeatedly, then goes on to list a variety of sins/challenges facing the listening community.

Anger, adultery, divorce, taking oaths; all of these are places Jesus offers insight yet also challenge. For example, if adultery was previously defined as sleeping with someone who is not your spouse, Jesus says just having lustful thoughts counts as adultery. Where do the lyrics for the Jackson 5’s song “I Want You Back” come in? Could it be in reference to Jesus’ listeners wishing for the OLD understanding of the Law back? Or is something else going on?

Another lectionary scripture from the book of Psalms, chapter 119, verses 1-8 offers hints. In verse 8 we read: “I will observe your statutes; do not utterly forsake me.” The Psalmist paints a vision of following God filled with zeal and honest intentions... but we all know how intentions go, right?

Like those who heard Jesus’ words, we know we might wish to be blameless and live lives that are correct and true according to God’s desires. We also know we often fall far short of what we wanted to do and what we are able to do. Like the Psalmist, we want to live lives that are “blameless,” where we “seek him with all (our) heart,” “do no wrong,” and where we “(obey God’s) decrees”.

Of course, if that had happened, the Israelites would not have had to wander the desert for 40 years, would not have seen their nation defeated and would not have needed a Messiah to come. Yet need these things they did.

Maybe the reason I heard “I Want You Back” lyrics in this week’s lectionary was the reminder “To seek God with all our heart.” We may not do it as we intended and when we realize it, we need God back. Yet unlike the song, God isn’t likely to go off with someone else and forget about us. We are told that when we cry out, the God of love hears us and reaches for us. Maybe that was what I heard in the lectionary this week. What songs came to mind for you? No matter what, we as a church ALWAYS WANT YOU BACK at worship each Sunday, so please join us for worship and know that the God of love is waiting for all of us. No matter what.

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Brian