

“A RADICAL OATH”

January 25, 2009 Instructive Eucharist: Scouts
Psalm 62:6-14

Introduction:

Scouts and families, it is a joy to have you with us. I know that Hal Cory and James Cobb have been challenged and filled with joy working with your sons on this “God and Church” Award. I hope this instructive Eucharist is proving helpful by serving as a time of instruction and learning regarding our worship service.

At this time in the service the Preacher preaches. Most often, we use the Scripture lessons read earlier, seeking a message from them that we then seek to pass on to the congregation.

Today, with our Scouting guests in attendance a theme I want to address has to do with these young men seeking their “God and Church” Award, and what God’s Word today might say to them, and us. I think our lessons and the lifestyle Scouting espouses both call for A Radical Oath. What do I mean?

As Boy Scouts you have learned an *Oath*, a *Law*, a *Motto*, and a *Slogan*. Combined, these teach you a set of moral values that help you grow into the purpose of Scouting.

These values were organized by Lord Baden-Powel, a British Army Officer, who had the original vision

for an organization to train boys to become good citizens, God-fearing men, and get boys out of the cities and into the woods. Listen to these statements attributed to Lord Baden-Powell:

Statements by Lord Baden-Powell

"The Scout, in his promise, undertakes to do his duty to his king and country only in the second place; his first duty is to God. It is with this idea before us and recognizing that God is the one Father of us all, that we Scouts count ourselves a brotherhood despite the difference among us of country, creed, or class. We realize that in addition to the interests of our particular country, there is a higher mission before us, namely the promotion of the Kingdom of God; That is, the rule of Peace and Goodwill on earth. In the Scouts each form of religion is respected and its active practice encouraged and through the spread of our brotherhood in all countries, we have the opportunity in developing the spirit of mutual good will and understanding.

"There is no religious "side" of the movement. The whole of it is based on religion, that is, on the realization and service of God.

"Let us, therefore, in training our Scouts, keep the higher aims in the forefront, not let ourselves get too absorbed in the steps. Don't let the technical outweigh the moral. Field efficiency, woodsmanship, camping, hiking, Good Turns, jamboree comradeship are all means, not the end. The end is CHARACTER with a purpose.

"Our objective in the Scouting movement is to give such help as we can in bringing about God's Kingdom on earth by including among youth the spirit and the daily practice in their lives of unselfish goodwill and cooperation."

So, the first thing I want to draw our attention to today is that Scouting rests upon an active belief in God, and the rules God has given us regarding how best to live together, and serve one another.

The Scout Oath

*On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.*

By this Oath - or Promise - you are committing yourselves to a lifestyle, that if taken to heart, will serve as a moral compass for you as you grow into adulthood with

the aide of Scouting.

The Scout Law is a teaching of specific moral values, or checkpoints that will help you follow your compass in doing your best for your God and your country. The twelve checkpoints are values that shape you internally as well as your external actions toward others.

They teach you to be:

TRUSTWORTHY – Simply, be honest, always!

LOYAL – to your family, Scout leaders, friends, school, and nation.

HELPFUL – helping others without pay or reward. It is having a servant’s heart like Jesus has for us. Jesus said He came to serve, not to be served.

FRIENDLY – to all people. Jesus said to “love others like you love your self.”

COURTEOUS - to everyone regardless of age or position.

KIND - A Scout understands there is strength in being gentle. Kindness, or gentleness is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is acting with the intentionality of Christ Himself. It is Jesus’ Golden Rule: *“Doing unto others as you would have them do unto you”*.

OBEDIENT - A Scout follows the rules of his family, school, and troop; the laws of his community and country.

He also seeks to learn and follow God's rules for successful living.

CHEERFUL

A Scout looks for the bright side of things. He cheerfully does tasks that come his way. He tries to make others happy.

THRIFTY

A Scout carefully uses resources, time and property. God will provide all the resources you need to do the will of your Heavenly Father.

BRAVE

A Scout can faces danger even when he is afraid. He has the courage to stand for what he thinks is right even if others laugh at or threaten him. It took great personal courage for Jesus to suffer on our behalf. He is the model we look to for moral and physical courage.

CLEAN

A Scout keeps his body and mind and environment fit and clean. It is controlling what you allow into your mind and body. Garbage in – garbage out.

REVERENT

A Scout is reverent towards God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others.

If keeping this Scout Law was easy everyone would be doing it. Because it is hard to do the right thing, live

the right way, take right actions is precisely why God encourages you to do the same. Jesus said: “Broad is the road that leads to destruction. Narrow is the way that leads to everlasting life.” The choice is yours.

The Scout Motto

Be Prepared. Be prepared for what? How about life? God wants us to be alert – live alert, because we never know what challenge is right around the corner. But we do so knowing that God is with us on the journey. We are never alone when we invite Christ to be part of our lives. The Holy Spirit of God, living within us helps us to be prepared to face whatever life brings our way.

The Scout Slogan

Do a Good Turn Daily. Jesus teaches a parable about the Good Samaritan. He did a really good turn for a man who had been robbed, beaten, stripped naked, and left to die. The parable was told in answer to the question, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus told the story as a way of saying our neighbor is the person who needs us the most. If every day you ask God to show you who is your neighbor you will end up helping an incredible number of people during your lives.

In short, Scouts, I'm saying: because of your involvement and commitment to Scouting, you have made a pretty radical oath to live and serve a certain way.

Lord Baden-Powell got it right. He based the Scouting lifestyle on the lifestyle God calls us to because God calls us to make a radical oath, and live it out in our daily lives. Our Gospel lesson teaches

The Radical Lifestyle of Christianity.

John the Baptist, who was a prophet from God sent to prepare the way for the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, said three radical things.

The first radical thing John announced is that the Kingdom of God is "at hand". 'At hand', what does that mean? It means that God's world, which is spiritual, is right here. It's not way out there, by and by. It is right 'at hand'. If our material hand could reach into the spiritual realm; if our material ears could hear from the spiritual realm; if our material eyes could see spiritual things, we would realize that God is right here, right now. There is a veil God put between our material world and God's spiritual world.

It's a radical idea! You don't have to go to the highest mountain to find God. You don't have to go to the

deepest depth of the ocean to find God. You don't have to beat yourselves with chains, take drugs, fast for 40 days, or meditate endlessly trying to cleanse yourself of all negative and impure thoughts in order to find God.

God has already found you. God is right here. God's spirit has already been with you, seeking permission to become part of your active existence. So, how do we have union with God.

John the Baptist says this radical thing: repent. What! Boy Scouts repent? Of what? Boy Scouts are already goody-too-shoes, aren't they? What do you think parents? Aren't your sons already perfect?

Lord Baden-Powell didn't expect perfect boys to join Scouting. He expected real boys to join; boys who needed to learn about higher standards of living available to which God is calling us. That's why he set a standard of law around virtues such as trustworthiness, and loyalty, and kindness, and courtesy, and obedience.

Baden-Powell knew what God knows. We are not perfect, but we can become better than we were; and with God's help we can we can receive forgiveness that will last for all eternity, and live graceful lives here and now.

John the Baptist calls us today to repent. To

turn from thoughts, words, and actions that we know are not pleasing to God – stuff in our lives that hurts people, and ourselves. If we turn from these “sins” and ask God in Jesus Christ to forgive us, God will. It’s guaranteed. It’s a radical action we take to trust God with our secret sins.

God is right here said John; therefore repent. Now the next radical action we are to take is to believe in the Good News. The Good News is that God loves you, Christ died for you; God raised Jesus from the dead to show us a radical life waiting for us if we have the courage to ask Jesus to come into our lives – forgive us of our sin, set us right with our heavenly father, and fill us with God’s Holy Spirit.

I asking to you consider making

A Radical Oath.

Christianity is not for sissies, or cowards. It is not a guarantee that nothing bad will ever touch your life. It is not for selfish people whose only concern is themselves. Christianity is for people who want their lives to mean something – to make a difference in this world. It is for people who look around at the craziness and say, “this is not how I want to live. There has got to be something better I can give my life too.”

A Radical Oath

Jesus radically changed the world, and He is looking for another generation of people who are willing to be radically changed in order to be part of radically changing your generation and making the world a better place to live.

Holy Cross Church would love to be a place and a people you come to worship God with; grow with; and begin to serve your world through.

There is more still to experience in this worship service today, but if God tugs at your heart and leads you to want to make a commitment to worship, study and grow in your spiritual life and faith, we welcome you with open arms.