

Sermon Title: **“For the Healthy Body and Healthy Church”**

Bible: **Exodus 20:1-17 & John 2:13-22**

When: on the 3rd Sunday in Lent, March 3, 2024

Where: about 25 people (plus YouTube viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

O Lord, let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. Do You Have Any Routine?

Do you have any routines? Some sports players have their own routine when they play games. If you like tennis, you might hear of the weird rituals of Rafael Nadal. On the tennis court, he always places his drink and water bottles in the same way, like arranging the bottles with the labels facing the same way. He even bounces the ball specific amounts of time before serving. This is not because of any obsessive compulsive disorder, but because of the psychological benefits for performing the game on the court. When we follow a routine, it can give us comfort and help us feel in control.

My mom has a routine for her health benefit. My mom has diabetes, so she checks her blood sugar at bedtime, after waking up, and sometimes before eating meals or a couple of hours after a meal. My wife has a morning routine or to-do list: Drink a cup of water and coffee, have several pieces of apple, get the lunch box ready, sometimes eat yogurt and take vitamins. I have some morning routines too, not always, but many days, because I am not a morning person: make the bed, shave my face, brush my teeth, take a shower, use mouthwash, dry my hair, and help with my wife's morning routine. Do you have any routines in your daily life?

2. Ten Commandments, Jesus, and John Wesley

Today's first reading is from Exodus 20. There are Ten Commandments. After the Israelites were delivered from the slavery, they received these Ten Commandments. I believe that they needed their own commandments, rules, and laws—the basic guidelines or some kind of routines—in order to build their faith community. Is there anyone who can memorize these Ten Commandments? I cannot memorize the Ten Commandments. Please do not tell my boss, the District Superintendent, about this. But thankfully, Jesus boiled the Ten Commandments down to two. When people asked Jesus about what the greatest commandments were, Jesus answered to love the Lord our God, and to love our neighbors. The first four commandments are for the relationship with God, and the last six commandments are for the relationship with others. I memorized this. You can memorize this summary by Jesus, right? And our denomination's founder, John Wesley, might summarize the Ten Commandments into three. We call them three simple rules or the general rules of John Wesley: Do no harm, Do good, and Stay in love with God. I can memorize these simple rules, so please tell my boss that your pastor memorizes the simple rules of John Wesley, and tries to live by those rules.

3. John Wesley's Advice for Healthy Body

John Wesley gave us not only spiritual guidelines, but also physical health guidelines. At the time of John Wesley, medicine was only for the rich. For those who could not afford medical care, Wesley wrote a book called "Primitive Physick" in 1747. He described the book as "a

plain and easy way of curing most diseases, to set down cheap, safe, and easy medicines, easy to be known, easy to be procured and easy to be applied by plain and unlettered men.”

This book was a bestseller at that time. And I would like to share some of his healthy living advice from the preface. I believe that we can still apply some to our lives.

- Observe all the time the greatest exactness in your regimen or manner of living.
- Abstain from all mixed, all high seasoned food.
- Use a plain diet, easy of digestion; and this as sparingly as you can, consistent with ease and strength.
- Drink only water, if it agrees with our stomach; if not, good, clear small beer.
- Use as much exercise daily in the open air, as you can without weariness.
- Supper at six or seven on the lightest food; go to bed early, and rise early in the morning.
- To persevere with steadiness in this course, is often more than half the cure.
- Above all, add to the rest, (for it is not labor lost) that old unfashionable medicine, prayer.
- And have faith in God who "kills and brings to life, who brings down to the grave, and raises up."
- Walking is the best exercise for those who are able to bear it; riding for those who are not. The open air, when the weather is fair, contributes much to the benefit of exercise.

4. For the Healthy Church

In the second reading from the Gospel of John, Jesus cleansed the temple. That's because the temple became a marketplace for distinguishing the poor from the rich. We cannot be free from money, but is money the reason why we gather here? What do the Ten Commandments teach us? What do Jesus' two greatest commandments teach us? We are here to love our Lord, and to love our neighbors. We might need money to love our Lord and to love our

neighbors, but not the other way around. Money is important, but it is just a tool and a means. Our goals are to love our Lord, and to love our neighbors.

This coming April, our denomination will hold its 2024 General Conference. Every four years, the General Conference sets the rules and establishes procedures for virtually every aspect of the United Methodist Church's life. Since about 25% of the UM churches in the States were disaffiliated for various reasons last year, there will be significant discussions, votes, and decisions about our denomination's direction and inclusiveness. It will not be easy, but it will be for the health of our Church. So, please remember our denomination in your prayers and thoughts.

I would like to close with John Wesley's other three simple rules for voting. In our denomination, in our church, and in the States, and in Korea, we have crucial elections coming up. This comes from the wisdom of Wesley in regard to voting:

"October 6, 1774, I met those of our society who had voted in the ensuing election, and advised them 1. To vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy 2. To speak no evil of the person they voted against, and 3. To take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side."

Which rule is easier to follow? And which one is more difficult or impossible? May God's gentle and powerful presence be with all of us!

Closing Prayer

O Lord, thank you so much for giving us this life, our body, our mind, and our spirit. Thank you so much for calling us as the church. And please guide us to be healthier and healthier when we love you and when we love our neighbors. In Jesus' name. Amen.