

Let us pray,

Lord help us to keep our focus on building people and this world up, not down. Help us to be a positive force in this world.

Amen.

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As you probably already know, this weekend is Scouting

Weekend at Grace!

I was a boy scout but only for a few months.

I was super dedicated in cub scouts, but Marching Band and other music ensembles took over my life and left little time for much anything else.

But I do remember being sworn into troop 44 in Bushkill Township, Pennsylvania.

And they made us recite these foundations of scouting.

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**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.**

**Scout Law: A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.**

**Scout Mission: The mission of Scouting America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.**

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Well these sound like really great foundations!

And I have to say, all of the Boy and Girl Scouts, now I think just Scouts, that I have met, have always been the more ethically and morally exceptional people.

Scouting isn't just about learning about nature, how to survive in the wilderness, or knot tying, which was my favorite of all the scouting activities.

Its about making better humans.

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And in that sense, the church shares in this similar mission.

When things are boiled down to its foundations, the role of the church isn't much different from the role of the Scouts.

Its to help us flawed humans, work towards an ideal, that we wish for the future of our society.

We all know that Scouts and Christians are not always following the laws that they promise to follow.

We falter, we make mistakes, we succumb to temptations, and sometimes we just dont want to be good people.

Sometimes we are in our rebellion era.

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But that is exactly why, organizations like the church and the Scouts are so important to this country and the world.

Because in their foundations they hold to the ideals that we as a species must never stop aiming towards.

We need direction and a place to come back to when we fall short.

We need a community that holds us accountable, but also holds us up when we fall, not if, when.

Because life isn't about being perfect, it is about choosing to do the right thing, each and every day, and having grace on others and ourselves, when that choice is too hard to make some days.

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As Paul says;

“<sup>4</sup> Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup> It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

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God loves us even in our darkest of moments.

God loves us even though we are not perfect, even though we don't always live into the ideals of what God is calling us to be.

God loves us sinners,

Which means, we don't have to be perfect saints.

But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't look to sainthood.

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Ideals give us a path forward, and God's love for us, gives us forgiveness and an eternity of second chances, when we fail to live into those ideals.

Love doesn't need to be patient, if the person or creatures we love are perfect.

Its only in those imperfections that call us to be patient.

As Christian people, we are called to be patient.

Not complacent, not passive, not un-prophetic.

But patient.

We are called to walk with people, not at them or away from them.

We are called to be the outward expression of God's love in the world through our actions of patience, bearing, believing, hoping and enduring.

We are called to live a different way from the world.

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We are called to live a life that is slower, one that is contemplative, one that is merciful and compassionate.

One that walks through the valley of the shadow of death, and fears no evil.

One who believes that love truly endures all things.

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Let us continue our path of moving toward our ideals.

For scouts that's being; trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

And for Christians, it's loving our God with all our heart, mind and soul, and our neighbor likewise.

The world is broken, it is filled with sin and evil.

But there is good out there, and my hope is that we can continue to fight the good fight, and be the hands and feet that our God needs us to be, in slowly bringing this world back to God, back to the ideals of the Garden of Eden, back to true Godly love.

Amen.