
Youth Sermon – Bradley Reeves

A sermon by Bradley Reeves
Easter 4 – Year A

Hello everyone. My name is Bradley Reeves and I'm a senior at North Atlanta High School. I plan on attending the University of Georgia next fall. I really, really love music and business; I have a band called Parasymphony and we play small gigs all around Atlanta, as much as we can.

I've been a member of the Cathedral ever since I was born. I have many memories from all my years here. My parents were engaged right out there; they were married right there; and I was baptized there. My mom loves to tell the story about how she felt me kick for the first time in her stomach right in the back pew.

I've grown up around the church and a large part of who I am developed directly out of just coming to Sunday School, going on youth retreats, Kanuga, acolyting every Sunday, acolyting weddings. The Cathedral, especially the youth group, has done so much for me. I met fascinating young adults—everyone from Brandon back when I was in sixth grade, all the way to Rebecca, Meg, Jacob, and Maggie.

These people have really shaped the way I think about religion, the way I see myself as a member of the Cathedral. They helped me make and change my views not only on religion, but on all aspects of life. What I love most about our youth group is that we don't only discuss God and the Bible every Sunday; we speak about everything that we have going on in our lives—everything from school, friends, sports, family, to music and anything else we have happening. Then seamlessly, our youth leaders bring everything back to religion. That really is fascinating!

Through them I've learned that everything that happens to us comes right down to what we believe. How we act around others is all dictated by what we believe. I choose to be Christian, especially Episcopalian, not only because of how my parents have raised me, but because I consider myself to be a member of this church.

I stand for everything our church believes. At this point in my life, I've developed my own ideas about religion. I haven't always been as passionate as I am now for Christianity. I owe a large part of this directly to church and especially the youth group.

It can be hard for teenagers to learn to love Christ from just sitting in church services, no matter how beautiful and meaningful they are. I'm speaking from experience. The youth group is an essential tool to connect young people to the church in a way that they can understand. It saved me. If it wasn't for the youth group, I do not know where I'd be with my relationship with Christ.

I've experienced several significant lessons from the youth group here at the Cathedral, but there's one that comes back to me consistently.

A couple of years ago, I think I was in middle school, probably eighth grade, I walked down the stairs in the Atrium after acolyting just a typical 8:45 service and I saw everyone in one of the classrooms beside the fishbowl. I was a couple minutes late, so I walked in quietly and I saw this food laid out on a table on one side of the room. It seemed as though people were being divided into groups. There were four or five groups; one was large, and the next was slightly smaller, and so on until

the last group, which only had two people at that point.

It seemed as though Mark, one of the adults, was leading the class, so I walked in sort of confused and he invited me to join the smallest group as the third member. He quickly explained everything: we were doing an experiment and it seemed as though everyone in the class would receive an amount of Monopoly money to spend around the room on food. The members of the largest group were to receive just a couple dollars, the next group would receive a couple more dollars, and so on, until my group—the smallest group. We received more money than all the other groups combined.

I couldn't believe my luck; I just had been handed enough money to eat like a king! It didn't help that I hadn't had breakfast that morning. I took my money and I started purchasing food: muffins, scones, doughnuts, sugary drinks—all kinds of things. I remember there was a list of services that the less fortunate people when it came to the Monopoly money could do for the people who had more money to get some money for food. I don't remember anything specific, but I do remember people asking me for money, people asking if they could do things for me, random things, stupid things, so I gave away a little bit of my money but I decided to keep most of it.

Before I knew, it the class was over and I was full. I was feeling sort of sick. The table still at ample food and there were still several hungry people around the room but it was time for us to leave.

I didn't think much of it then, but as I've grown I've realized its metaphorical significance. At the end of our lives, we'll all be fine. Some things may seem as though they matter now, but in the end, the only thing that really matters is your personal relationship with Christ.

Help people because you can. Love people because you can. Someone will always have more than you. Someone will always have less. Live to help other people. At the end of our lives, we'll all be full with God's love, so what else could we want?